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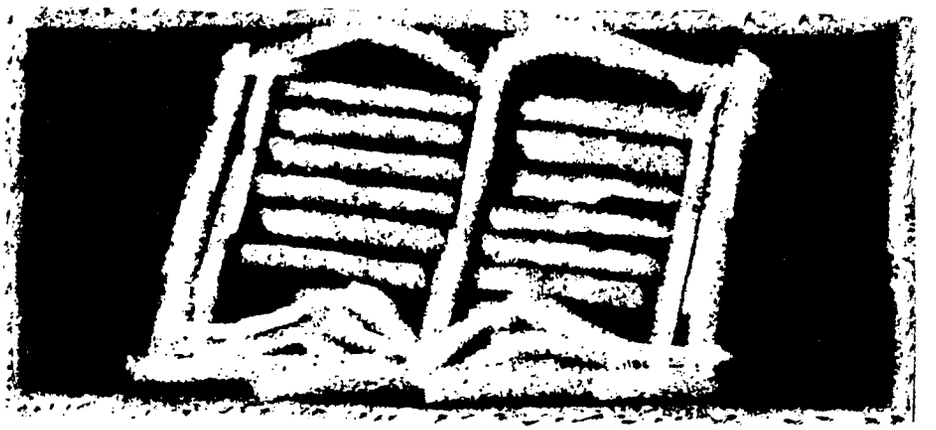

Catholic Book Week

LAZARUS AS HERO

The Novels of Lagerkvist

WINSTON WEATHERS

GROWING UP CATHOLIC

Wilfrid Sheed

WHITTAKER CHAMBERS

James Finn

'LET IT BE PRINTED'

Elizabeth Bartelme

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CORRESPONDENCE

"Rebellion in Steel"

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: May we correct the misleading, if not false, impression left by Russell W. Gibbons in his article "Rebellion in Steel" (COMMONWEAL, January 22). Mr. Gibbons listed the Textile Workers Union as one of three organizations that "elected slates opposed to the old-line leadership by impressive margins and despite all the disadvantages of challenging an incumbent organization."

The facts are:

The first contest since 1952 for leadership of the Textile Workers Union resulted in a nearly 2 to 1 victory for the 25-member Administration Slate headed by General President William Pollock and Secretary-Treasurer John Chupka, incumbents respectively since 1956 and 1953. The election took place June 3, 1964.

Both general officers as well as eight vice presidents on their ticket were, what Mr. Gibbons calls "old-line leadership," whatever the phrase means. All have been incumbents in top posts for periods of time going back to the days the union was founded in 1939.

The opposition slate included 12 incumbent vice presidents, also "old-line leadership," many of whom have served in top offices for periods ranging up to 25 years.

Neither the composition of either slate nor the results of the election support Mr. Gibbons' contention that we "underwent new leadership" during 1964 or that we "elected slates opposed to the old-line leadership." HY PECK

Public Relations Department
Textile Workers of America

Reply

Buffalo, N.Y.

To the Editors: If I have an argument with Mr. Peck, it is one of semantics, and not substance. By including the Textile Workers Union among those which I said elected slates opposed to the "old-line leadership" in 1964, I am basing my facts upon the union's convention last June.

At that time all accounts indicated that the rather bitter fight within the TWU revolved around incumbent President William Pollock and former "emeritus" president Emil Rieve. Prior to the June 4 election, a majority of the executive board of the TWU were anti-Pollock and generally considered part of the Rieve "old guard" opposition.

Mr. Pollock's victory, according to his own words, represented a "new day" for the union as the nine anti-Pollock vice presidents defeated were in effect a repudiation of the Rieve faction. Damon Stetson, New York *Times* labor reporter, drew the same conclusion in the June 4, 1964 *Times*.

Former TWU leader George Baldanzi, who left the union to form the United Textile Workers in 1952 after his ouster by Mr. Rieve, has described the latter as an "old line" leadership. The end of the Rieve influence now indicates that the two unions may enter into merger discussions.

Mr. Peck occupies a different vantage point than one does from outside his union, but I believe that it is not "misleading" and certainly not "false" to describe the change in the composition of the TWU executive board last year as a removal of those supporters of the union's "old line," for if the Rieve group did not qualify for this description there was much wasted oratory among convention delegates.

Accordingly, I would still describe the defeat of a majority of the Rieve faction on the union's board as undergoing new leadership, and this opposed to what some of its own spokesmen have termed "the old guard." RUSSELL W. GIBBONS

Women As Priests

Newark, N.J.

To the Editors: By all means let the priesthood be open to women who *qualify:* those who have the appropriate natural gifts (physical stamina, intelligence, emotional maturity, adaptability . . .) *and* God's call. Or, at least, let the possibility be considered.

But Dr. Heinzelmann and Miss Daly rather seem to have the cart before the horse. Wouldn't it be wiser if women were first given more opportunity to prove the caliber of their gifts in the related fields of theology, preaching, pastoral counseling—perhaps as part of the diaconate—before a consensus may be found?

Both writers speak as if the Church alone were prejudiced against women. They have some reason, of course (O those centuries of celibate men!), but neither mentions that the world, too, is reluctant to give woman her due. Is the fact that there are fewer women than men in life's executive positions, professions, even the arts, a sign of prejudice, woman's own "mother-conditioning," or simply because most of us are not suited to the roles? I honestly do not know but suspect that all three aspects should be considered.

Has anyone, by the way, ever said that there are more men in heaven than women? Would any really intelligent man think Teresa of Avila less glorious than some earthy little priest such as the one in J. F. Power's *Morte d'Urban?* Jesus Himself behaved remarkably toward women — especially considering His times. He spoke to Mary, of the Martha and Mary story as a *friend,* an equal. Whoever, then would worry over what St. Thomas said on this particular subject? Remarkable as he was, he doubtlessly also thought that the earth was flat!

As for Jewish washings, Dr. Heinzelmann only read part of the Bible Leviticus 15 also declares male emissions unclean, both man and woman after cohabitation unclean, while Numbers 19 prescribes washings for priest after certain bloody sacrifices and for anyone who has touched a dead body.

Neither Dr. Heinzelmann nor Miss Daly have made it clear to me just what the nature of the equality between man and woman *is.* Both give the impression, at least, that being equal means being exactly alike. I am no more convinced of this than I am that women should be the fathers of children. Certainly, men and women have the same

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personal dignity before God—in mind, and heart, and soul. But I do not think women need apply to the priesthood, at least in the same proportion as men, in order to fulfill their eternal destiny. I rather doubt that at the particular judgment we will be asked how many sacraments we received, or what role in life we held. JOSEPHINE CASGRAIN

Catholic Colleges

Toronto, Ont.

To the Editors: In general I found Leonard Swidler's article about the educational crisis well-done. As one completing work for the M.A. degree in Theology here and seeking employment as a full time lay assistant in the Newman university apostolate in secular universities, I would like to make better known some of the paradoxes, inconsistencies and difficulties in connection with this field, and take exception to two aspects of the article.

My interest in this apostolate is principally generated by 1) a growing distaste for the ordinary set-up of the Catholic college as being unable to enter fully into the mainstream of American thought and culture in a realistic way; 2) a fear of the type of experience which is so painstakingly documented by John Leo in his account of the Kearns case (the situation of a theology teacher would be even more precarious); and 3) by what I would call—for lack of a better word—"compassion" for the thousands of Catholic students attending secular colleges and universities for whom our bishops seem to feel no very pressing responsibility, outside of throwing up a building or two and sending in a priest or two to say Mass.

And yet the statisticians tell us that there are two Catholic students in a secular college or university for every one in a Catholic one—and the ratio is going to become greater not less. And then the vast majority of our teaching and catechetical personnel are concentrated on that 33%—some estimate as much as 90%! Considering that these university students will be the leaders of their communities (at least the

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U.N. REVISION?

If the world survives the season of danger in Southeast Asia, the moment will be ripe for a careful reconsideration of the structure and role of the United Nations. The fact is that today the U.N. is in danger of becoming a nought in the day's critical political calculations. The Cuban crisis frightened the great powers into taking a step toward peace, the test-ban treaty; but the very finesse with which this two-nation confrontation was accomplished has had the unfortunate effect of deflecting interest from the United Nations. If the United States dare glance beyond the Southeast Asia crisis, it would do well to see that any solution in Vietnam be exploited to increase rather than sap the importance of the U.N.

The present impasse of the United Nations dates back to the decline of the Security Council as an effective organ. In 1950, when the Security Council was paralyzed by the Cold War and Soviet vetoes, the General Assembly adopted overwhelmingly the U.S.-sponsored Uniting for Peace Resolution. The resolution opted for a "loose" rather than a "strict" interpretation of the U.N. Charter by vesting the Assembly with "implied powers" to take action when the Security Council was hopelessly deadlocked. This "loose" interpretation of the Charter has been consistently upheld by most U.N. members and by the World Court; but it is now the ground for the Soviet and French objection that U.N. peacekeeping forces in Egypt and the Congo were illegal.

The Russian objection is hardly a matter of devotion to strict constitutionality, however. When the Security Council, whose rights the Soviets now pretend to defend, seemed to act against Soviet interests, it too became the object of Communist attacks. Later, the Secretary-General came under fire for supposedly exceeding his duties; and after the death of Hammarskjold, the fusillade was extended to the entire Secretariat. Could it be more obvious that the crucial issue is the U.S.S.R.'s objection to *any* organ of the United Nations acting in conflict with Soviet plans?

But is this not only natural—for a Great Power to refuse to pay for actions

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against its own interest? Could not the U.S. have avoided the present U.N. crisis by ignoring the requirements of Article 19 which denies a General Assembly vote to members two years in arrears?

In one sense, at least, the answer to both of these questions is "yes." After all, it has been argued, we got what *we* wanted in the Middle East and the Congo, and under U.N. sponsorship besides; do we have to make the Russians *pay* for it too? In support of this position is the evidence that U.S. insistence on the enforcement of Article 19 stems from the need to soothe Congress rather than diplomatic necessity. And the question arises: would the U.S. pay for a General Assembly-voted action which challenged its interests?

Unfortunately, the Soviet refusal to pay its share has not been proposed on grounds so frank as those of self-interest. It is cloaked in a specific objection to one of the most hopeful developments in the U.N.'s short history: the ability of the General Assembly to respond flexibly to international crisis. As it stands, the Russian (and French) position is a challenge to any hope of the U.N.'s evolving into an effective peace-keeping body. And the extent of the foreign policy "defeat" the Soviets underwent in the Middle East and the Congo should not be exaggerated; if an international organization is to have any meaning at all, even Great Powers—including the United States—will have to be willing to suffer at least minor setbacks at its hands.

It was almost inevitable, given the recent trend in international drama, that when the United Nations sank into nearly total paralysis as a result of the Article 19 struggle, the script should require Charles de Gaulle to step forward with the suggestion that he had the answer. De Gaulle, unfortunately, does not have the answer. His proposed five-power conference (including Red China) to reconsider the U.N. Charter seems merely a whimsical piece of de Gaullemanship, considering the present tangled state of U.S. - Sino relations. But even without the answer, de Gaulle has perhaps asked the right question. It may be time for a revision of the U.N.'s structure. The U.S. and Russia have more common ground than in the days of the Security Council's decline. The pattern of blocs in the General Assembly has changed with the admission of new members and the loosening of both the Western alliance and Communist monolithism. Perhaps the Security Council should be strengthened now, as the Soviets claim, to better reflect the actual location of power in the world. Perhaps the Council might be enlarged to provide better representation for the new Afro-Asian nations and to offset a more strict limitation of that group's power in the General Assembly.

The energy for the test-ban treaty sprang from the Cuban missile crisis. Can the Vietnamese conflict, the Indonesian withdrawal, and the Article 19 dispute provide a similar impetus for a stronger and more effective United Nations?

COMMUNIST DIVISION

The coincidence of new Russo-Chinese tensions with the Vietnamese crisis comprises one of its most crucial aspects. The present Russian leaders seem at last to be making strenuous efforts to regain foreign ground lost to the Chinese in the latter days of Khrushchev. The Kosygin visit to the Far East is the most important *démarche* in this direction. The coolness with which the Soviet Premier was received in Peking is one indication of continuing difference and of the conflicting regional objectives highlighted by his trip. It was likewise reflected in the joint Soviet-North Korean statement supporting the "patriots of South Vietnam," which, while accusing America of imperialism, reasserted the principle of "peaceful co-existence" so odious to the Chinese.

Another phase of Soviet Russia's new stress on the Far East is Moscow's decision to redirect the economy of Far Eastern Siberia toward the Orient. If this shift is planned partly in the name of efficiency, because of the excessive cost of transportation by land to distant European Russia, it also reflects the Soviets' intention of rebuilding their influence in the Far East. The presence of North Vietnam and North Korea at the March 1 Communist conference in Moscow would indicate how well the Soviets are succeeding. And sparsely-settled Mongolia still serves as a major Russo-Chinese bone of contention.

Soviet-Chinese rivalry has also been stepped up in Africa lately. It has been noted in Algeria, the two Congos, Guinea, Kenya, Mali and Senegal, as well as in the Afro-Asian Communist front itself. In Africa, as elsewhere, the Soviets are able to supply appreciably more military and economic aid, while the Chinese, as non-Caucasians, seek to make the most of racial propaganda.

But it is in the Vietnamese crisis itself that their difference is most striking. Where the Chinese would like to intensify the struggle to the point of embroiling the U.S.S.R. in a war with the United States, the Soviets, true to the policy of Khrushchevian coexistence, do not want to go beyond supplying some *matériel*. If there is no attempt to lay North Vietnam waste from the air, and no invasion, the two Communist rivals will have enough conflicting interests to keep them seriously at odds.

THE SELMA CAMPAIGN

Selma, Alabama, is one of the most obdurate of the black belt communities, and is therefore a prime target for the civils rights movement. It is the home town of Birmingham's Bull Connor and the Stronghold of Alabama's White Citizens' Councils. Since the first days of the Kennedy Administration, it has been the focus of a series of voter-registration suits aimed at breaking down the statewide pattern of resistance to Negro registration. Selma's population of 28,000 is roughly half black, but less than 300

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Negroes are eligible to vote. In one suit filed against Selma and Dallas County officials, the Justice Department pointed out that from June 1954 to 1960 the County Board of Registrars registered more than 2,000 whites and only 14 Negroes. It said that among those failed to meet voter registration requirements were Negro school teachers with college and advanced degrees. During the course of Dr. Martin Luther King's recent campaign in Selma, nearly ten times as many Negroes went to jail as were eligible to vote in Dallas County.

What the Selma campaign demonstrated anew is that the techniques of non-violent protest have been mastered in the South—they unfold dramatically, with increasing pressure on the white establishment—and that they have a way of flipping all sorts of levers into the "go" position. The strong support for the demonstrations by the Edmundite Fathers and Brothers in Selma is one example. Another is the support within the National Council of Churches for drumming up public opinion against Hammermill Paper Company's decision to locate in Selma. Trying to keep new industry out of Selma as a protest against unfair voting procedures may or may not be a wise course of action. But it is a coherent one, and one that the Selma City fathers might well be anxious about. As for the Edmundites, their courage is all the more remarkable in view of the attitudes of the Birmingham-Mobile Diocese and Alabama laymen in general.

The important political and judicial levers are also switched to "on." A federal judge, responding to one of the Justice Department's suits, ruled that Alabama's unfair voting test must be withdrawn and that County registrars must process at least one hundred applicants each working day. Even more significantly, Dr. King won his interview with President Johnson and extracted the expected promise to seek a new law to strike down the elaborate barriers against Negro voting. The President has not yet indicated a formula that will observe the usual amenities toward states' rights, while insuring against state voting abuses, but prospects are that a strong one will be set before Congress and guided along with the full force of the executive.

Meanwhile, it is becoming clear how firmly committed American Negroes are to the non-violent protest movement. The bitter attacks on Dr. King's methods have faded in the wake of the new civil rights law and the resounding defeat of Goldwater and his philosophy at the polls. Public opinion analyst Lou Harris finds that 75 percent of Negro Americans now believe civil rights can be achieved without resort to violence. Eighteen months ago the figure hovered around 60 percent. There is also a sharp rise in the percentage of Negroes who believe "Whites want them to get a better break." Interestingly enough, the type of demonstrations and strategies that arouse the most anxieties among whites—school boycotts and school busing plans—are now opposed by a majority of Negroes. Indications are that the energies of the civil rights movement are more thoroughly channeled and mobilized than ever before, thanks in part to the movement's leadership, and in part to the passage of last year's civil rights law.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

VIETNAM AND REALITY

This week we are closer to both the best and the worst in Vietnam than we probably ever will be again. The best—the attainable best—would be a negotiated isolating of Vietnam, a settlement which did not serve the particular advantage of Hanoi. The best might even include a wider Southeast Asian détente which acknowledged the power the United States deploys in the air and sea in Asia.

We are at this moment of opportunity because we have used our air and sea power. Yet having used it, we seem to shrink from its logic; we rebuff proposals for negotiations. We seem to fear the very logic which the immense machinery of the American military establishment is designed to serve. Military action not directed to a valid political goal is not merely useless, it is pernicious. But in Vietnam we now draw back from the initiatives which would justify what we have done in our attacks on the north.

Drawing back, the impact of our action dissipates, the shock falls away. This week there have been new fears and uncertainties created in Hanoi, Peking, and Moscow which could make negotiations valid. The very explicitness of the warnings China has broadcast, recalling the Korean war and defining a commitment to North Vietnam, manifests the Chinese fear of war by miscalculation. China can only suffer from a war which brings our airpower over the mainland. The Soviet Union apprehensively contemplates heavy political costs if it does not intervene in the crisis, and profound risks if it does.

The conditions have been created in which a political settlement, or at least a political stalemate, could intelligently and realistically be pursued. But at this climax we are silent: there seems a political impotence in Washington that exists in fantastic contrast to the immense and sophisticated machinery of diplomacy and war which serves the nation. At the center there is contradiction. It is not a peculiar failure of the Johnson Administration. This lapse of forceful intelligence and of will existed in Washington's political offices before Mr. Johnson became

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President: that much is evident in the casual way the commitment to Vietnam was made under Mr. Eisenhower, and in the terrible insouciance with which the Kennedy Administration bound the United States to solve, through new theories of counterinsurgency warfare and politico-social engineering, a Vietnamese crisis whose origins go back more than a century.

The failure can be seen in what officially was said in Washington the week this crisis began. On Sunday the 7th of February the White House described the American raids on North Vietnam as retaliation for provocations "ordered and directed by the Hanoi regime." "The key to the situation," the communiqué went on, "remains the cessation of infiltration from North Vietnam." This statement combined an intelligible rationale for the American air strikes with an attainable, or at least a negotiable, implied demand. On Thursday the 11th our second group of air strikes was declared to be the consequence of "further direct provocations by the Hanoi regime," identified as "an increased number of Viet Cong ambushes and attacks." The dynamiting of the American billet at Quinhon was mentioned only as one instance of these provocations. The implied demand was for an end, or at least an undefined limitation, of the Viet Cong rebellion itself.

There is merit in much of these two statements, but there also is an ominous confusion of propaganda with reality, of anxious aspiration with what is possible. The assumption of an identity of Viet Cong and Hanoi discipline and interests is unproved at best, and perhaps ingenuous—as the call for an unqualified end to the rebellion in the south under threat of bombings in the north is ingenuous. Yet these two statements, at this writing at least, are all that we have to define American policy—and they are not enough. They do not represent bad policy, or arguable policy: they suggest that there is no real policy.

A nightmare voice is heard from the past: "to govern is to choose." Pierre Mendes-France campaigned for power in France in the 1950's saying those words in a period of France's own Indochina crisis, when governments shrank from realism and from decision; and the outcome, in 1954, was a humiliating defeat for France. Vo Nguyen Giap, then the Viet Minh military commander and now the North Vietnamese minister of defense, is reported to have said to the French commander at Dienbienphu: "If you were defeated, you were defeated by yourselves."

Another Dimension

Something must be added. Vietnam poses another issue that is more important than the political debate itself. Whatever the policy that eventually is set in this matter, or that is allowed to serve in default of decision, there is a moral quality to the problem more complex than the United States has faced before. The grand geopolitical sweep of so much current discussion of Vietnam and China cannot quite obscure the fact that we are dealing here with a war in which both sides are victims. One can know the Viet Cong for the ugly terrorist movement that it is and yet know that Vietnam is not a Hungary overrun by foreigners. Whatever else this war is—a war of interventions, of Chinese-influenced North Vietnamese expansion, of ideological subversion—it is also a civil war: a civil war more than twenty years old and with roots in a society of peculiar instability, cultural and social shock, and characteristic violence.

In our debates we cruelly lack, I think, the kind of commentary that was provided for France by a few such men as Camus and Mauriac during the Indochinese and Algerian wars. It seems in order to quote Camus: "If it is true that in history, at least, values—whether those of the nation or those of humanity—do not survive unless they are fought for, the fight is not enough to justify them. The fight itself must rather be justified, and elucidated, by those values. When fighting for your truth, you must take care not to kill it with the very arms you are using to defend it—only under such a double condition do words resume their living meaning."

If we would go on killing in Vietnam, our reasons had better be good ones. If we would extend the war, it had better be for well-considered reasons. I do not say this to deprecate the consciences—often the anguish—of those who make these decisions. I know that to deny the resort to war, the cruelty of any action taken in the context of nations, is to deny a condition of men's life in society. We are liberated from destructive action only if we withdraw from political action itself. Such a choice does not exist for a nation. The only possible choices are between responsible actions and the irresponsible. But that is precisely the issue.

Such remarks as these are perhaps a long way from the politics of Washington and Hanoi in the last weeks of February. But about too much of this crisis there is an atmosphere of responsibility refused—of default, and of refuge taken in questionable geopolitical abstractions. The tree of life is greener: and full of thorns and blood. This is war we are dealing with—and not only war among the Vietnamese but involving Cambodian mercenaries, and the Meos and Rhades, and the dumb villagers killed from the air, and the Americans, many of them very bitter, and many of them risking not just the bullet in the body but kidnapping or a captivity that has no Geneva conventions or assurance of repatriation.

It is well, I think, to speak in just this way, for American political debate and decision are much concerned with the gross shape of values, like Mount Rushmore sculptures. We have had little experience as a nation of the particular tragedies of history—at least since 1865. Our heresy is enthusiasm. We deal in the large virtues; but virtue itself, even political virtue, exists in the particular.

WILLIAM PFAFF

(Mr. Pfaff is co-author of The Politics of Hysteria, *just issued as a Harper Colophon paperback.)*

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ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

WITNESS FROM THE PAST

Elsewhere in this issue James Finn writes, most perceptively, about Whittaker Chambers' last essays, *Cold Friday*. Reading his article and other comment on Chambers' posthumous book made me turn to earlier things that were written about him, by me and others. Here I was struck by how sharply people's views of this man varied.

Then and now one's estimate of Whittaker Chambers depended and depends on one's views on the Hiss case. For a variety of reasons I was convinced early in the game that Chambers was telling the truth and that Hiss was guilty. I was not yet one of the editors of COMMONWEAL, but I said so in an article in these pages, and I still remember some of the *ad hominem* comments I received from Hiss partisans.

Whatever else it was, the Hiss case was one of the most emotional events in our modern history. Indeed, in a way the trial itself and the whole debate surrounding it seemed more European than American—it was really too ideological for our taste. Nonetheless the tale of Soviet espionage was all too real, and as these events were described by Chambers, a certain portion of America's political innocence evaporated for good and all.

Chambers had had several heart warnings before his death in 1961, and as far as I know he was not able to produce a great deal of work in the last years of his life. But the man who was the central figure in one of the great dramas of our time lived out his life quietly on the Maryland farm he loved so much—sliding into relative obscurity and apparently relishing that fact.

I suppose it could be said with some truth that a few were glad to see Chambers disappear from the public eye. The Hiss case was *the* trial of our time; Alistair Cooke went so far as to say that a generation was on trial. It is true, I think, that many liberal intellectuals hated to face up to the hard facts in the case; they tended to identify with Hiss and to doubt and even dislike Chambers. Probably few of them today would deny the essential truth of Whittaker Chambers' picture of Communist espionage, but the man himself made them uncomfortable and I think they were glad enough to see him end his life in obscurity on his quiet farm.

I can see why Chambers made a good many people uncomfortable who themselves had no connection with or sympathy for Communism. Read his *Witness*, for example. Chambers was almost a classic example of a committed man, opting for Communism at an age when most of his contemporaries were choosing that day's equivalent of the Beatles. I once called him a born believer, and I think he was. The gifted son of a highly unusual household, Whittaker Chambers was from childhood on a seeker, a questioner.

Early in life Chambers showed that theological-philosophical-mystical bent that dominated his later thinking. Some people are never content simply to accept, to conform, and Chambers was one; he always had to search out purpose and meaning. Eventually he chose Marxism, and when he did it was typical that he gave himself to his new cause wholeheartedly.

In the service of the Communist Party the young Chambers endured poverty and long hours and hard work, proving himself so well that eventually he was one of those chosen to disappear into the Party's murky espionage underground. I don't suppose there is any doubt that Chambers hurt the United States during this period of his life. In the end, though, he broke with the Communist apparatus and did his best to sound the alarm for those whose eyes were still closed. This was, remember, in the late 40's. I imagine the climate would have changed eventually anyway; it is hard to see how the most determined innocence about Soviet intentions would have survived Korea and the rest. But the fact remains that the Hiss case did serve for many as a crucial turning-point; once it was over, a good many illusions were gone with it.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me emphasize that I am not saying all the hard anti-Communists of the period were right either. Too many of them insisted on behaving as if liberalism, socialism and Communism were the same thing, and as usual this only confused the issue. If others were slow in taking Chambers' accusations seriously, in large part it was because there had been too much reckless crying of "Wolf! Wolf!" when there was no wolf. There were those, however, inside and outside of government, who just could not bring themselves to take seriously the notion of a Soviet spy ring right here in the U.S. They regarded reports of such activities as fairy tales, useful to the tabloids for scare headlines but with no relationship to reality. Whittaker Chambers was the witness—to use the term he himself picked—who helped change all that.

Life imitates art, and so it did in Chambers' case. He was always a seeker, and from the point of view of his Communist masters the trouble was that he never stopped seeking. Eventually Chambers came to know and hate the evil thing he had once served so eagerly; eventually he was to say that the trouble with Communism is that there is in it no room for God. Believing that, he had no choice but to play another part in the great struggle between good and evil. It is for his role as witness in this struggle that we are all in his debt.

JAMES O'GARA

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LAZARUS AS HERO: THE NOVELS OF LAGERKVIST

WINSTON WEATHERS

In his recently completed tetralogy, beginning with *Barabbas* and ending with *Pilgrim at Sea*, Par Lagerkvist has written a succinct but provocative myth of death and resurrection. Writing in a century in which cultures, nations, and peoples have survived vast physical destruction, in a century in which the death of the six million can be followed by rebirth into nation and state, Lagerkvist explores the very meaning of *thanatos* and escape from *thanatos*, not simply on the ordinary level of flesh but on the more refined level of spirit, not simply in the ordinary terms of personal or corporate existence but in the greater terms of transfiguration. Quite simply, Lagerkvist asks the question: Can man move from the limited miracle of physical survival to the greater miracle of spiritual transformation?

One of the principal literary devices used by Lagerkvist in his study of death and resurrection is the Lazarus archetype, the man returned from the dead to the realities of this world. In a way, the entire tetralogy is a study of the Lazarus figure, not simply the prototypal Lazarus that appears in the first novel of the series, but the various Lazarus figures, who are the main characters in all the novels.

The Lazarus archetype, as constructed by Lagerkvist, is a most provocative and haunting one. As though to emphasize the symbolic rather than literal nature of the character, Lagerkvist leaves the archetype unnamed, simply referring to him as that man who was raised from the dead and who lives on the Mt. of Olives, outside of Bethany. By avoiding the name, Lagerkvist forces us to concentrate upon the particular characteristics he gives the figure rather than upon any characteristics we may have previously associated with the character in Scripture.

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Lagerkvist wants us to accept a Lazarus who, first of all, has become the alienated man, the man removed from the social order, the man who lives in the empty house on the mountainside, no Martha or Mary present, the man spoken of in whispers, the man with his function in society—in Lazarus' particular case, to witness for his God—but strangely isolated and removed from the society nevertheless. Second, Lagerkvist wants us to accept Lazarus as the man who has encountered nothingness and who comprehends the horror of utter nihility. Lazarus explains about his encounter with death: "I have experienced nothing . . . I have merely been dead. And death is nothing . . . The realm of the dead isn't anything." Lazarus, truly comprehending the existence of nothingness, can say, "No . . . the realm of the dead isn't anything. But to those who have been there, nothing else is anything either."

The Characteristics of Lazarus

Without exaggerating Lazarus' statements, we see that Lagerkvist is depicting him as one who in his acceptance of nothingness withdraws from social identification. Lazarus' very lack of concern whether Mary, the mother of Christ, believes in her son's divinity or not; Lazarus' very lack of concern whether Barabbas believes in the divinity of Christ, Lazarus' cold, polite acceptance of his own role as instrument and witness in a metaphysical scheme which he seems scarcely to comprehend—all these examples of indifference reveal Lazarus as the disengaged man, the truly disinterested human being.

It is not difficult to see, of course, that the Lazarus archetype is a fictional representation of twentieth-century man, and that the events of Lazarus' life become the events in modern moral experience: the man who has experienced death and yet has managed to maintain his existence, the man who has experienced nothingness so dramatically and fully that the experience colors his whole view of reality,

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the man who has known such darkness that his whole personality has become desolate and alienated—this is the Lazarus-modelled modern post-war representative of Western civilization.

To depict the Lazarus archetype as the alienated, disengaged nihilist, Lagerkvist sets up a group of physical characteristics and mannerisms that become part of the Lazarus identification throughout the tetralogy. One is the Lazarus manner of staring, of "gazing straight out into the room" with "pale, lack-lustre eyes," with "queer opaque eyes that expressed nothing at all," with "vacant eyes which didn't seem to mind in the least whether one lied or not." The dead, dull eyes and the staring straight ahead, what Lagerkvist calls the "emtpy gaze," become a general Lazarus characteristic; as does the "curiously flat" voice, the "monotone" voice; and as does the "sallow" face, "hard as bone," the "skin . . . completely parched." Lazarus' face is "desolate . . . like a desert." These characteristics of the man on the mountainside, the man who feasts on bread and salt, staring out over the world, become key, uniting descriptions of all the major characters in the tetralogy.

Having established the archetype, Lagerkvist pursues the Lazarus experience through a series of variations, each of which is some specialized study of some facet of modern character. The first of these variations is presented in the character of Barabbas, the main character of the first novel. Barabbas is easily recognized as a Lazarus figure because of the several death-like experiences he undergoes, followed by escapes from death and returns to the realm of ordinary existence.

The first of these escapes or resurrections is when Barabbas is released from the prison in Jerusalem, freed in the place of Christ. He comes forth from the prison, we are told, looking like a "ghost," and following his escape from the prison-grave, Barabbas has a tendency simply to "stare into space." As the fat lady explains, "it wasn't any wonder he seemed a bit queer after lying chained up in a dungeon for so long . . . if a man is sentenced to death, then he's dead, and if he's let out and reprieved, he's still dead, because that's what he's been and he's only risen again from the dead, and that's not the same as living . . ."

Quite rightly the fat lady recognizes that Barabbas has been dead and has been pulled from the death back into existence, but existence is not the same as living. Barabbas, like Lazarus, having experienced death, sees the nothingness of life. He is so changed that people scarcely recognize him; he never really speaks to people; he seems to be somewhere else entirely. Alienated and nihilistic, true to the Lazarus archetype, Barabbas prefers "to sit by the mouth of a cave staring down over the Jordan Valley and away across the sea that was called the Dead."

A second Lazarus-like adventure for Barabbas is when he becomes a slave in the Roman salt mines. His imprisonment in the mines is a kind of death for him, or as Lagerkvist calls it, "a descent into hell," and when he is at last rescued from this death, pulled from the grave of the mines and brought back into the realm of existence, again, like Lazarus, "he resembled a dead man rather than a living one," with "eye-sockets expressionless," almost totally non-communicative. Finally, at the novel's end, Barabbas descends into the graves of the dead that are the Roman catacombs, figuratively dies into the labyrinthine darkness, then ascends into the dark, empty void of the Roman night.

Barabbas is a Lazarus-figure primarily, but the special qualities that set him off from other Lazarus-figures in the tetralogy are: his lack of faith—"I have no god," he says time and time again; his role as outcast, in a more grievous conflict with society than simple alienation implies; and his intellectual rigidity, revealed in his constant scientific explanations of phenomena he cannot otherwise understand—for instance, he sees the glory of Christ but explains it away as optical illusion—and in his insistence upon rigid concepts and definitions—for instance his belief that the son of God could not be crucified, since the very definition of God prohibited such a thing. Barabbas is the modern Lazarus, one of the people brought back from the death experience of the twentieth century—alienated and nihilistic—but also possessing those particular moral qualities of skepticism, rationalism, antipluralism that have beset many a modern personality.

The second Lazarus-character created by Lagerkvist is that of Ahasuerus, the man in Jerusalem who refused to let Christ, on the way to Golgotha, lean and rest against his house. As a result of this rejection, Ahasuerus is cursed with immortality, and his immortality becomes that form of being saved from death which is his Lazarus-like resurrection from the grave. God's granting Ahasuerus everlasting life is the same as God's granting Lazarus a return to life or granting Barabbas his release from prison, the mines, and the catacombs.

In every case, it is an overcoming of death, literally or figuratively, and in every case the gift of life results in something less than the wonderful and the glorious. Once Ahasuerus has been saved from existence, he says that he "felt like a stranger" standing, looking at the world, "some outsider who ought not to disturb them in their life." He has become alienated as all the Lazarus-figures are alienated, and in this alienation and commitment to existence, he is in the same brown mood that Lazarus and Barabbas exist in. Ahasuerus says, "Had it not always been my dearest wish never to have to die . . . Why then did I not rejoice? Why did I feel no gladness?"

And, of course, he takes on the same physical characteristics and mannerisms of Lazarus: "I would often stand," he says, "staring in front of me, or out the window, with empty eyes, seeing nothing and without really knowing that I was there . . ." People say of him, "How queer you look; you look as if you died long ago . . . You've got such funny eyes . . . enough to scare anybody . . ." His eyes are "dried-up wells . . . depths with nothing in them . . ." The sad, staring, alienated man—Ahasuerus loses his wife and children, his whole sense of community: "One day she was

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gone. She and the child . . . My innerself . . . was as empty as a deserted house."

The sad, staring alienated man has the special qualities of being without love, incapable of physical pleasure, restless in the universe, humorless, questing for peace. Ahasuerus becomes the modern man who simply accepts destiny as it comes, but Ahasuerus is ever restless, ever searching, ever pondering his destiny. Ahasuerus is the compulsive quester, the man who has lost the zest for life in the twentieth century. He is passionless and anxious.

Lazarus in the Twentieth Century

Together, Barabbas and Ahasuerus define a great deal of modern man's spiritual agony, for out of their combined characteristics and in their common Lazarus Experience they portray twentieth-century man simply existing, not living, escaping death, but caught in a limbo of desolation – without love, without faith, without community.

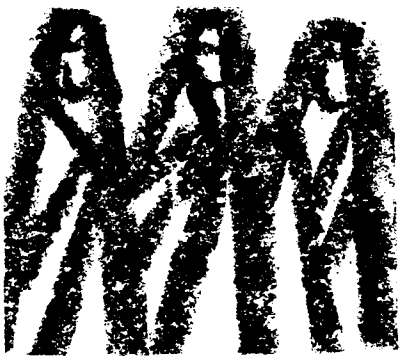
Hollow men in the waste land, Barabbas and Ahasuerus are cousins to that range of twentieth-century heroes from Gide's *Immoralist* to Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* to Camus' *The Stranger*. Yet there is a difference between Lagerkvist's Lazarus characters and many of the other modern disillusioned, alienated characters, in that Lagerkvist insists upon a moral consideration being given to their problem.

Lagerkvist not only portrays modern man in the Lazarus condition but he goes ahead and confronts the Lazarus figure with the concept of moral transformation and transfiguration. Indeed, he confronts his characters with a very definite and difficult mystique of a death and resurrection on a higher level than that which they have experienced.

Barabbas, for instance, is confronted with the mystery of Christ. He follows Christ to Golgotha and witnesses the crucifixion. He is a witness Easter morn to the blinding emptying of the tomb. And Christ represents, without question, a death and resurrection quite different from that of Lazarus: a resurrection which is not simply a survival but a true immortality, a true sense of life.

All his life, as Barabbas continues to have his Lazarus-like experience, he ponders the possibility of Christ, he ponders the possibility of morally changing, of becoming the new man, of dying to this world and being reborn above the level of simple existence. But at the novel's end, Barabbas has come to nothing more than a philosophy of utter death, not a philosophy of a transfigured life. "Death!" he cries. "He always had that inside him, he had had that inside him as long as he had lived." We are told that "he was immured in himself, in his own realm of death." He cannot accept a way of breaking out of the idea of death, or a secular existence that is a death in itself. Remembering the Lazarus that he met a long time ago, he can conceive of him only as "long since dead again and . . . grinning with his skull in the everlasting darkness." He connot conceive of a Lazarus rising beyond a cycle of the grave and meaningless existence. And when he comes to his own final death Barabbas can only commit his soul into darkness and the void.

Whereas Barabbas received insight into the moral scheme of things by his visits to Calvary and the Mt. of Olives, Ahasuerus receives the same insight by a visit to Mt. Parnassus, which moves the discussion out of the strictly Christian framework. Up on the mountainside, Ahasuerus finds the Sibyl—an aged woman "looking down upon the world that she had left so long ago," staring down as Lazarus stared, a woman who as Pythia in the temple at Delphi had undergone a lifetime of deaths in the dark, grave-like pit, the pit where the god Apollo "erased" her identity away, the pit from which she ascended only to find herself in a world "filled by a boundless void," herself alienated from the world: "People avoided me," she says, "People hung back from me . . . I was . . . abstracted and alien to reality in some way; I became a stranger to their world, though I lived in it and could have lived nowhere else." The Sybil is, in short, the Lazarus prototype in Hellenic terms.



Entering the Sibyl's house through its "low, doorless opening," Ahasuerus observes that he "had never been in so small a human dwelling before," and in this sepulchre-like house he discovers that "away in a dim corner a gray-haired man was squatting—a man or a child, he could not be sure which," but a person at least who, we are told, "understands nothing," maintaining a "changeless smile," "that queer perpetual smile," "his face . . . unstirred by all that people call life." This Sibyl's son is indeed, a corpse-like figure in the grave, but when, with Ahasuerus present, this son, the god Apollo in fact, escapes from the grave, ascends to the peak of Parnassus, and disappears into the mystery of a higher level of identity; when we are told, "Now he has thrown off the garments in which he hid, his earthly husk, and become again what he really was. The father has fetched him home . . .," we know that a resurrection has taken place, not a resurrection from a Lazarus grave to a Lazarus existence, but a resurrection *from* the grave *of* the Lazarus existence itself into the realm of true life and true meaning.

In his encounter with the Sibyl and her son, Ahasuerus encounters the complicated truth of the two kinds of death and the two kinds of escape from death. Barabbas had encountered the same truth in Lazarus and Christ, but whereas

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Barabbas could never see the connection, and could never accept the reality of the Christ, Ahasuerus does see and he knows what he has seen, and though he is not transformed or transfigured on the spot, he is able at last, in the third novel of the tetralogy, *The Death of Ahasuerus,* to achieve that escape from simple existence that he had so long feared he would never achieve.

Barabbas could only meet his final death alone and within darkness, but Ahasuerus dies within the community of a monastery, without fear—"That is the land for which a man must really yearn: the land of death, the holy land . . ." His ability to bring the words *holy* and *death* together suggests a death far removed from the secular death alone that Lazarus has enacted. Ahasuerus sees *this* death as a drinking at the spring, as a coming into peace, the "assuaging of his burning thirst," and after his death, the lay brother at the monastery observes Ahasuerus' "remarkable face, which now radiated so perfect tranquility."

Lagerkvist has given us in Barabbas and Ahasuerus the two polar possibilities, two clear answers to the initial question, "Can man move from Lazarus to Christ? Can man do more than survive, can he truly live? Can man learn to die a better death than all these little deaths we undergo and from which we gain not life but simple existence?" Barabbas is the dark no, Ahasuerus is the hopeful yes. But as we all know, truth is many times somewhere between a clear yes and a clear no.

Lazarus as Pilgrim

Lagerkvist went on to consider one more Lazarus character—this one called Tobias. Tobias is entirely the modern man, the soldier in the wars, caught in the ravages of post-war existence, who wearily wanders in a world completely forsaken, only to come upon an "unexpected encounter with death," not ordinary death, but a death that for Tobias becomes an epiphany. He discovers the corpse of a woman who bears upon her the stigmata. Death with the holy sign upon it. Not a Lazarus and Christ here, not a Sibyl and Apollo. But the same meaning. Death, but a miracle upon it.

Tobias is moved by this to make the pilgrimage to the site of holy things, seeking as he explains, "amid the pain a miracle . . . a transfiguration. . . ." Tobias becomes the skeptical pilgrim, the uncertain pilgrim, the most unlikely pilgrim. Adamantly non-institutional, denying the organized church, missing the smooth-sailing official pilgrim ship, Tobias is the Lazarus *figure* who rejects the limitations of the Lazarus *experience* and wills his way, though clumsily and ignorantly and hesitantly, toward the Christ and the Apollo, the greater death and resurrection that is life.

Tobias never really reaches his holy land. The tetralogy ends with Tobias on the pirate ship that is the symbol of the secular world, the modern world, the corrupt world. On this ship Tobias has succinctly re-enacted the major consideration of all the novels: he descends into the hold of the ship, dies into a long symbolic sleep, then ascends to the secular deck of ordinary existence, but questing and yearning for that greater ascension on the shores of the holy land. The ship does not really promise to carry Tobias to the holy land at all. Lagerkvist refuses to say whether man will or will not achieve the transfiguration that is more than survival.

If there is ambiguity in this final statement, it is an ambiguity not about God's world but about man's will. Some have read the final words of the tetralogy—"the ship glided imperceptibly forward over the endless sea, without a goal"—to mean that there is no spiritual goal toward which man can sail. But, of course, the whole tetralogy has been devoted to establishing the limited goal of Lazarus on the one hand and the greater goal of Christ on the other. Being without a goal means that our times, our culture, our society sails without commitment, but it does not mean that commitment is beyond the scheme of things.

What Lagerkvist's tetralogy finally seems to say, is this: Even though modern man may not achieve the Christ experience, he still can move on *beyond* the *Lazarus* experience to the experience of questing, the experience of an unconfirmed faith. If man is questing he is at least not accepting the meaningless existence of a Lazarus. Even if he does not achieve the resurrection of the gods into a new manhood, he can avoid the bread-and-salt existence that Lazarus proffers him. Tobias sails perhaps in folly, but apparently even a foolish pilgrimage gives a meaning to our life, a sense of community and goal, a *sense* of true life to sustain us until we can find the genuine experience. Even a foolish pilgrimage removes us from that sad apathy of Lazarus and even a foolish faith in a higher resurrection rescues us from Lazarus' preoccupation with alienation and nothingness.

SISTER SEBASTIAN

A BIRTHDAY CARD

i am drawn
to the beauty of
gray—blue gray
    that lacks a
    luster (under the dim light)
but suffers
winters cold and
autumns empty
    alone
struggles to exist
beside the untainted.

strange—
how when young
i loved the daisy.

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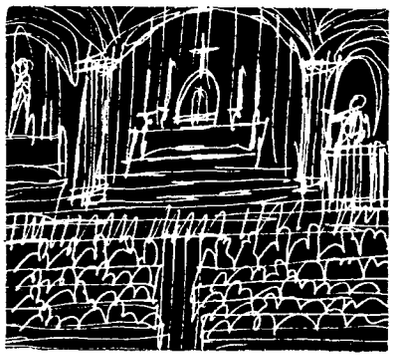
GROWING UP CATHOLIC

Ideal versus real

WILFRID SHEED



It is difficult to write about something in flux as if it were something fixed; probably by the time this essay appears my view of what mattered in the past—even of what happened in the past—will have moved on.

In a sense I have been lucky—but only "in a sense," because this kind of luck probably has to be paid for. The Catholicism I was first taught was compellingly attractive; its doctrines were presented with a reality which I suppose they will never lose for me, whatever I may wind up thinking I think about them. Besides my admirable parents who, in more senses than one, speak for themselves, I spent a good deal of time with one of those Irish grandmothers you read about, but very seldom meet: a woman to whom faith was a simple matter of fact, whatever else wasn't (she was quite capable of skepticism in other areas) and who connected religion with ordinary life "atmospherically" so that it gave a particular flavor to those years.

At the same time, by virtue of a freakish transatlantic education, I was spared the usual anxiety about local aberrations in the Church. If things were bad in one parish, you could be pretty sure they were better in the next. Large-scale peculiarities could be put down to quirks in the English or American character. The price for this was a certain alienation in both countries, a feeling that my real home was in yet some third place, which led at times to that combination of smugness and envy which is the common condition of outsiders.

Then again the Catholics I met as a boy had a natural geniality and kindness that I took in those days to be a special Catholic feature. Granted that they were always foreigners, wherever they were, perhaps they were a little less foreign than other people. On the social level, my early Catholicism had a distinctly clannish note. Protestants tended to be prigs, who worried about things like gambling; agnostics were sloppy thinkers and no match for Monsignor Knox (I am caricaturing my fifteen-year-old self for reasons of concision); Catholics were jolly good fellows, who thought wisely or not at all, and had a great sense of proportion about things like gambling.

An Ideal Church

This, roughly, was my view of the matter between nine and about twenty. I had an ideal Church firmly fixed in my mind and believed myself to be beyond the stage where a foolish teacher, or an incredible sermon could unsettle it. I went to a university where I was exposed to the follies of secularists, more than of Catholics, and my intellectual conviction has probably never been stronger than it was at that time. The occasional attacks I heard on the Church were aimed at some lesser church—which by an unhappy coincidence nearly all the non-Catholics I met had been tricked into believing was the real one.

Now an ideal church has its advantages, for a would-be writer in particular. It gives one a point of view and a choice of styles. (People who are brought up without any religious ideal at all are inclined to hug the secular consensus and to borrow the prevailing style, without even knowing they are doing so.) As a writer, I at first found my ideal-Catholic viewpoint somewhat imperious and overpowering and I catch, in re-reading my early stuff, occasional traces of dishonesty, presumably caused by my at-

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tempts to appease it. But every writer is tempted to appease something, and a Catholic background offers in return a density and richness that gives better than it gets. Later on I would find a genuine tension, as I tried to adapt the ideal to the real—because an ideal church is no substitute for a real one—and since this perhaps has been the dominant theme in my short history from twenty to now, I shall concentrate on that from here on in.

I have noticed (and perhaps this was the beginning of my own re-examination) that many quite intelligent Catholics have absolved themselves altogether from this tension. They are content to go on equating the ideal church of childhood with the real one, to the point of corrupting themselves with ingenious explanations of how this works: maintaining that the Church's imperfections are either extraordinary exceptions (the old-fashioned view), or else that the imperfections are totally inessential, and virtually insubstantial, "the human side of the Church"—as if nothing at all need be expected of human institutions, as if they didn't have to meet any standards at all. Many good Catholics have weakened themselves and the Church grievously with these evasions.

I was never tempted, in even my most violent reactions to the early dream, to believe that the Church was actually worse than other institutions. But I did feel a gathering dismay that so many Catholics didn't seem to think it mattered one way or the other. As long as their ideal Church remained intact—and it was likely to, because what could get at it either in the way of ideas or of facts?—happenings "on the human level" remained splendidly unimportant and virtually unreal.

This strikes me now as a violent perversion of the idea of a Church; yet for many years, I had accepted without question this condescension to the merely human. Catholic newspapers and magazines were insolently amateurish—and this was merely human. The atmosphere of one's parish might be as worldly as a quality ad—all too human. There were, in short, no tests for anything—except the rigid, subjective tests for private conscience.

It was obvious that many unbelievers, who were content to be judged on human achievements alone, came closer to moral reality than this. But the question was not simple. There was much both of saintliness *and* of moral intelligence among Catholics; what looked like a sloppy indulgence toward mediocrity was often a form of charity, a device for excusing others, not oneself; and there was often, among very good secular people, a lack of moral sophistication that kept them from advancing beyond the vaguest niceness, that left them hopelessly at sea with elementary moral problems.

Still, this lofty attitude to the specifically human seemed to warp the whole texture of Catholic life. Almost every parish I belonged to began to seem progressively more like a bus-station than a church; I had never felt half so isolated in a theater or a ballpark. None of this mattered, of course so long as one had the Mass and the sacraments—but a formula can only stand so much repetition; and I suddenly began to think that it mattered a good deal, in spite of the Mass and the Sacraments. The gloomy isolation week after week, the priest mumbling to himself while the audience yawned and scratched—this, in human terms, was a poor sort of meeting: and my own attempts to exalt myself above the human seemed falser and falser.

A Question of Focus

Since this is a personal essay, perhaps I should make note here of certain oddities of temperament that helped me get into this position.

The focus I feel most comfortable with is a very narrow one. I was, and am, prepared to ascribe something remote like, say, Spanish bigotry, to cultural and historical patterns unknown. (Although it should surely be asked what part the Church has played in forming that culture and history. The idealist is too prone to picture the Church as a perennial innocent by-stander.) But the tone, the human feeling of the Church in my own neighborhood, seemed to be something I could reasonably have an opinion about. My slightly cosmopolitan background is an accident anyway: by temperament I am almost exclusively interested in the place I happen to be in at the moment—whether it feels "right" (I can't put it more precisely than that), or whether it feels corrupt or unreal.

This, I suppose, is the stance that fiction-writing induces—and it must be the despair of those who do take the large view. There is no excuse, on the face of it, for leaving the Church because of a stupid school or an unfortunate parish: yet these are probably the precise reasons that most writers leave. And it is no answer to them that the "real" Church is not like that—or even that the Church in France is not like that. To them it is the Church they encounter in their own flesh that counts. All the rest is talk.

(Perhaps this view doesn't seem quite so outrageous if we turn it around for a moment, and talk of staying *in* the Church because we have met Christ in a single priest, or in one small community. The admonition to know trees by their fruit must have some bearing within the Church as well as without.)

By a process of dreadful attrition, I came next to the discovery that I was not as immune to the incredible sermon as I had thought. I had always understood that sermons were not going to be terribly bright (disappointing because I like to listen to them—but a case, like Spain, where you could accept the excuse). But slowly it dawned on me that most sermons were worse than unbright: they were downright repulsive. They spoke a language, they presupposed a view of life, that seemed to me virtually inhuman.

To take a trivial example (and most of the examples are trivial), for every sermon I have heard on a major doctrine, I must have heard—call it bad luck if you like—at least five on being a good example. And being a good example has

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turned out, as often as not, to mean things like no swearing, no dirty jokes and (in extreme cases) making sure that you are *seen* being a good example.

Now I don't know what sort of boy-scouts these sermons were originally written for; but their effect on a congregation of average present-day adults is dismally unreal. Swearing is a normal enough activity, tedious and self-defeating in excess. To preach against it in tones of shocked dismay is to suggest a serious inhibitedness and lack of contact; to talk of it in terms of Christian example is to talk something close to nonsense.

It will be objected that I have chosen a foolish example, but if you ignore the foolish examples, you are ignoring a great deal. And it is precisely my point that intelligent Catholics have ignored too many foolish examples, not realizing their cumulative importance. Again and again I have found myself listening to things which, in any other context, I would automatically dismiss as wrong-minded, or wilfully insensitive, childish or impenetrably smug. This, repeated over a lifetime, is no trifle. It affects your feeling as you go into church, it affects the feeling of the church itself, adding to its desolateness. That the only words spoken in English should be both foolish and remote is enough to throw anyone into despair and wonder. The wisdom, balance, realism that had been trademarks of my ideal church simply seemed to have been short-circuited on the parish level. And this was the level that I cared about. The rhetoric of the pulpit (together with some of the advice in the confessional, which was only the same rhetoric in a lower key) seemed to come from another world. An idealist would perhaps have sought out a pet monastery at this point, or a special priest. But even in my own idealist phase I had never cared for elite, specially-tailored religion: I wanted what everyone else was getting: the thing had to stand or fall in the parish.

And the parish seemed to me basically frivolous, a place where nothing was really taken seriously. Doctrine was not taken seriously; liturgy was not taken seriously; even morality (except for sex, which always threatens to break the spell, and is a natural enemy) is not taken seriously. By the one small mistake of insulting the human, the tangible, we had lost our grip on everything; nothing was real, nothing mattered.

Rhetorical Brimstone

These were the things I found myself thinking each Sunday as I listened to the irrelevant pep-talks, the advice without use or context. Whether the sermon was waspish or genial, whether it stressed character (i.e., buoyant submissiveness) or total passivity, made very little difference. The contrast with the solidity and sobriety of the Mass itself was bizarre. Perhaps the best way to put it is this: I have always felt that anyone who has not found the world in some sense a tragic place has just not been paying attention: and that anyone who has not adverted to this knowledge within, say, the last three months, has nothing important to tell anyone about anything. Rhetorical brimstone and prissiness are no answer to the fears that come in the night, to the sense of cosmic loneliness that Christ *matched* for us; nor, heaven knows, is "Christian cheerfulness."

I am no good at reading faces (better at voices). It seemed to me that a diet of this kind of instruction was infallibly calculated to produce second-rate people; but looking around at the dreamy, unresponsive expressions on all sides, I began to wonder whether the whole thing wasn't so irrelevant to their lives—their spiritual lives, even—that no real harm was done. In either case, though, they struck me as good-hearted patsies who would put up with just about anything; and I felt at odds with them over this. My alienation from parish-life was so complete that I never wanted to talk to anyone outside church—another sad curiosity, if you think of a church as a Christian meeting-place.

As for priests, I had admired them very much as a boy, and am still predisposed to do so. But, perhaps from seeing too much of one particular kind of parishioner, they seemed to older eyes to over-indulge in a boyish heartiness that could be almost as impersonal as a convention-greeting. This style is no doubt part of a laudable effort to please as many people as possible; but it increased my feeling that I was trying to worship in some kind of great transportation center or super-market. (Some priests give me this feeling even in my own living-room.) Something about the big-parish structure seemed to work against ordinary human contact; and indeed one's Catholic friends seemed to be drawn from just about everywhere except one's own community.

It would be misleading to suggest that I was the only person to have made these discoveries. Even in terms of my own, too-narrow focus, there has always been company—other Catholics whose reaction is so close to one's own that it is not fanciful to assume a special bond after all. Unfortunately, we had all, all the thousands of us, assumed ourselves until recently to be in virtual isolation. And there was, besides, a proneness among my companions to an impotent sourness, to an almost mechanical railing—against the system, against the clergy, against everything—that was almost more depressing than the problem itself.

In many ways, this kind of whipped-dog snivelling was the most unhealthy aspect of the Catholic life in the immediate pre-Council years. We felt, for reasons of extraordinary complexity, that we couldn't say all we wanted to say publicly. It was not, as an outsider might suppose, an overt suppression (although there was just enough of that to make it another factor) but a kind of built-in censorship: part loyalty, part fear of simplification (a genuine virtue of a good Catholic training—up to a point) and part the punch-drunk caution of a man brought up in a minefield.

The situation seemed to be in stalemate. The parish-

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system, which is in some sense both the blood and the nerves of the Church, had gone terribly wrong somewhere —not through bad will, but through a very grave misunderstanding of reality; extraordinarily subtle concepts like humility and obedience had been used with gross incomprehension to stifle the flow of opinion that every human institution needs for survival (when the pro-cleric says "we're only human" he means things like laziness and short temper; we mean things like the dangers of one-sided, uncriticized power). The natural critics had fallen into the cynicism of the helpless underdog, and some of them were to fall even further into a kind of permanent bleat that was one of the ugliest sounds ever heard: like an animal with its vocal chords cut.

"In Human Terms"

The problem was institutional, not personal: nobody was to blame. For this very reason, many of us were tempted to suppose that it would last forever, and made our plans accordingly: either ignoring the itch or trying to enjoy the actual scratching of it; using the parish as a sacrament-dispensary and ignoring the rest; or whining amusingly with a group of kindred spirits; or possibly both.

But while some of us were responding in these ways at least some of the time, there were others of better faith, who remembered what we had forgotten: the Church's freakish (in "human terms") vitality. These people—patient, charitable but unwaveringly persistent—are worth noting. The present Council has borne them out, and has left the more thorough-going cynics feeling a bit sheepish: probably a recognizable motif in church history. But even if the Council had done nothing, these people were cause for hope in themselves; these people were the Church—their existence was where the vitality came from, and where it is preserved during periods of stagnation. Vitality, as opposed to cheaply-won optimism and bounce. It is by meeting them, or more likely by reading their books, that one can keep a rational faith in the idea of a Christian community.

It hardly needs saying that, with such a recent background, I have strong feelings about the Second Vatican Council. The erosions of our woebegone (I had almost said God-forsaken) parish life were worse than one might have realized if one hadn't seen a sudden possible end to them. Recently in a small village parish I heard for several weeks in a row a really good dialogue Mass: and found that the bleakness of our chic, airplane-hanger churches was harder than ever to take afterwards.

That the Council is to such a large extent directly pastoral is evidence that our complaints were not altogether cranky. Except that this is alive and mine was dead, the post-conciliar church has a slight look of my old, ideal church. An optical illusion, no doubt, but one that may be shared by many.

It is tempting under a new regime to curse everything about the old one. But if we believe that the Catholic Church manifests Christ to each generation of men, we cannot be so summary in dismissing the last four hundred years. It would surely diminish one's confidence in the present reforms, reducing them to a level of mere tactical ingenuity, if one believed that the Church could go so totally wrong as that in the past. (If then, why not now?)

For this reason, I am disinclined to dismiss the past as a bad dream, or to bury these old grievances, now that things seem to be getting better. Even if the conciliar decrees are ratified and carried out in their full spirit, I shall always be puzzled as to how things went so wrong in the parishes. We may have tried to hang onto a good thing too long, or we may unconsciously have been proposing ourselves as the other term of a dialectic with Protestantism. In any case, I should be happier in my mind to know the divine purpose of these last curious years.

It is part of our recent tradition to soften this kind of criticism at the last minute with a wink or some verbal organ music. But some criticisms should not be softened, or they are lost. Writers and artists have again and again found parish-life sterile, unfruitful and even repulsive. It is no use pretending that it wasn't as bad as all that, that they didn't really leave the Church at all—it was and they did. If this was their total experience of the Church, I honestly don't see how they could have done otherwise, and retained their own vitality.

Duller and Grayer

But having said so much, there remains much that has not been said. I am not thinking here of my own steady refusal to take part in parish life, to do anything to improve it; or of my untested assumption that priests simply didn't want a layman's opinions; of, in short, my own place in the dreary pageant.

I am thinking, rather, of some residue, very difficult to define, that made the thing worth going on with, even at the black times. It was not simply faith in Christ, because that, *by itself*, can make the Church seem more puzzling than ever (this needs elaboration; but here I must leave it bald). It was something to do with the actual texture of life. To put it too simply, I have always felt that life would be duller, grayer, without religion. I have seldom, as an adult, felt that religion provided consolation (for every scrap of that, there has always been the two of agitation), but I have felt it added a heightening, an intensity, to everyday experience.

And this the Catholic Church has always provided preeminently, in the most worldly parish and during the most desperate sermon. Edmund Wilson wrote of Scott Fitzgerald's first novel that it contained every fault a novel of any merit could contain, save the unforgivable one—it did not fail to live. In my darker moments, which I admit have been frequent, I have never been tempted to think worse than that about the Catholic Church.

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An apocalyptic view

WHITTAKER CHAMBERS

JAMES FINN

About two years ago, I reread *Witness*. I found it then, as I had a decade earlier, an engrossing book. When all the reservations are registered—and they are neither few nor insignificant—it must be acknowledged that the record Whittaker Chambers has left of his days on earth has a force which time will not soon blunt and a stature which it will not soon diminish.

Witness had an immediate importance because it was the apologia of a man who figured centrally in a case which, for a time, focused the political attentions of a nation, and to some extent, modified them. The immediate assessments of the book were, inevitably, *acts* in the drama which was working its way out, and they affected the evaluation of the book. A dozen years have not settled all the dust that storm raised; the reverberations of that clash yet sound. Still, the air is quieter now and we can assert that *Witness* will last for reasons which Chambers himself came to deprecate. He feared that people would be distracted from the overwhelming questions which he posed by the background which he judged necessary to place the questions in their proper context. Yet it is precisely in this background, this context, that the life of the book is to be found.

Chambers was a sensitive, intelligent, retentive observer whose life provided enough material for several of the classic autobiographical patterns. He came from a family that, for the horror they inflicted on one another, could vie with the Tyrone family of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey*. He grew up in a small village which allowed him to observe and meditate on the wonders of nature. He went on to attend a great university in a great city and to develop an intense intellectual life. He soon joined the Communist Party, which led him to engage in an underground political life. After he broke with the Party he worked up to the high post of a senior editor of *Time*. Then he became a central figure in the Hiss Case and the storm center of political debate. During these years he married and had a family, travelled and worked at odd jobs, translated and thought and wrote. All of this he recalled, ordered and evoked in brilliant particulars. The atmosphere of *Witness* is thick, sometimes oppressive, but it sustains the weight of reality evoked and is the proper medium for those people, both living and dead, who played their role in the drama that drives inexorably to that overwhelming question which Chambers cast in several forms: "Is God the alternative to Communism?" "Does the West deserve to survive?" "Which will prevail—God or Man, Soul or Mind, Freedom or Communism?"

To a man who asserted that his purpose was to witness to the truth implied in these questions, it might seem ironic that a debate on the merits of his last essays, *Cold Friday* (Random House. $5.95), should turn on the question of the number of inflections of the Russian noun. Yet this is the point at issue between Conor Cruise O'Brien and Wm. F. Buckley Jr. (Those who have an equal interest in the Russian noun can find this first-rate pedagogical exchange in the *New York Review of Books*, November 19, 1964, and in the *National Review*, December 15, 1964. Mr. O'Brien writes in the first publication, Mr. Buckley in the second.) The exchange would probably serve to confirm Chambers in his general pessimism about mankind.

But I would do an injustice to Mr. Buckley to suggest that he leaves Chambers and *Cold Friday* stranded among the numerous declensions of the Russian noun. For he also has a point of difference with Irving Howe and in order to rescue Chambers from the charge of logical inconsistency he describes him as a poet whose thought moves by allegory and paradox. While Mr. Buckley's invocation of the Beatitudes and the person of Jesus Christ, for the basis of comparison, seems to me excessive, I think he is quite right when he says that "Chambers was above all a poet, with a poet's understanding of political affairs. . . ."

We understand a poet to be someone who writes what we recognize as poetry. Although he wrote, and even published verse, it is not in this sense of course that we apply the term to Chambers. He was a poet in that he was sensitive—to people, to events, to nature, to art—and was able to express the insights and *aperçus* available to him in frequently memorable language. This is indeed his great strength, and it asserted itself in many ways. From abundant possible examples let me pick one from *Cold Friday:*

"Few men, I think, can love life with so intimate a particularity. But, progressively in the last two years, I had to ask myself: Is there not something essentially base and ignoble in this mere fondness, like an appetite for bonbons in a grownup? One has seen it all. Another day's sun is just another sweet, rationed in minutes. Yet, when I look from the hills, it is the eye that betrays me always. So perhaps there are reaches of meaning beyond the bare command to pluck it out."

This sharp, revealing insight parallels these lines

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"And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell
Quickens to recover
The cry of quail and the whirling plover"

which are lines from Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*. Both express that deep, human attachment to the simple beauties of nature that can assert itself against both mood and will and a suggestion—not Wordsworthian—that these beauties hold meanings not readily grasped.

But—now to the harsh charge—Chambers was also an ideologue. And the poet and ideologue dwell in the single person like Jekyll and Hyde, at best uneasily and at times disastrously. The person who is both artist and ideologue has always had a difficult time, for his art will not totally surrender itself up to the service of an ideology and yet the ideology must always strive to keep it subservient. This is an unending war in which the casualties are numerous. In a very real sense Chambers is among them.

To pursue a line of argument that will probably please neither those who attack Chambers nor those who defend him from all attack, it would be easy to pair some of Chambers' most extreme statements with those from great poetry. For example:

Cold Friday: "What is the West's answer to Communism. . . . It doesn't exist." Yeats' "The Second Coming": "The best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

Chambers: "The West is swayed by a profound will to die." Yeats: "Things fall apart; the center can not hold."

Chambers: "The only possible solutions will be made by the Bomb." Yeats: "Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,/ The blood-dimmed tide is loosed."

A little effort would yield closer parallels but the conclusion would be the same. The two sets of statements are of a different order and cannot be read in the same way. The ideologue in Chambers is paramount here and has distorted insights and convictions that he had elsewhere better expressed. The strength of the ideologue is his rigid conviction, which allows him to override what are for other people troubling and sometimes insurmountable obstacles. Chambers has properly defined the kind of moral superiority the ideologist committed to Communism can feel:

"Have you the moral strength to take upon yourself the crimes of history so that man at last may close his chronicle of age-old, senseless suffering, and replace it with purpose and a plan? The answer a man makes to this question is the difference between the Communist and those miscellaneous socialists, liberals, fellow travelers, unclassified progressives and men of good will, all of whom share a similar vision, but do not share the faith because they will not take upon themselves the penalties of the faith. The answer is the root of that sense of moral superiority which makes Communists, though caught in crime, berate their opponents with withering self-righteousness."

I do not accept the accordion-like extension which allows Chambers to shelter everyone from Communists to men of good will under one all-encompassing umbrella. And even if I did I would not accept his conclusion—accepted by Communist and non-Communist ideologues alike—that the Communist is morally superior to the "weaker" deviants because he takes upon himself the penalties of his faith. Many who deserve better than to be termed "spiritual vagrants" early escaped the strong pull of Communism because they discovered in the affairs of men a natural law which said the enormities in which their cooperation or collusion was demanded by that faith could not be justified by any ideology. They did not fail in commitment or dedication, they saw rather that it should be more properly placed. It is a dangerous romanticism and a false reading of reality which allows one to say—as Chambers did—that the great modern confrontation is between the Communist and the ex-Communist.

A proper corrective to such a reading of reality is found throughout Pope John's *Pacem in Terris* but most particularly in this already often quoted passage:

"It must be borne in mind, furthermore, that neither can false philosophical teachings regarding the nature, origin and destiny of the universe and of man, be identified with historical movements that have economic, social, cultural or political ends, not even when these movements have originated from those teachings and have drawn and still draw inspiration therefrom. For these teachings, once they are drawn up and defined, remain always the same, while the movements, working on historical situations in contant evolution, cannot but be influenced by these latter and cannot avoid, therefore, being subject to changes, even of a profound nature. Besides, who can deny that those movements, in so far as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval?"

I do not quote this passage in order to dismiss Chambers, however. While I believe he made a common error of mistaking the non-ideological person for the non-principled, I believe that by unintended example as much as by exhortation he did confirm our need for renewed political imagination. Incapable himself of offering present political guidance, he was even in what he termed the "scraps and tatters" that make up *Cold Friday*, capable of directing attention to large and important issues. Those who want to follow a more enlightening investigation than Chambers provided can find it—to name one example—in a remarkable recent book by Glen Tinder, *The Crisis of Political Imagination*. Chambers is rapidly becoming a possession of the past. His books can be recommended for those who wish to gain or regain not merely knowledge but a sense of a special, important period in our national history. But other works are necessary if we are to advance beyond the ideological strife which has laid waste to so much talent and energy and of which Whittaker Chambers was an incompletely recovered victim.

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BOOKS

FOR BROTHERHOOD

This list includes books of general interest in the field of intergroup relations chosen from among the many published from August, 1963 through July, 1964. They were selected on the basis of their contribution to the search for community in the pluralistic society, and for their concern with interreligious, interracial, ethnic, economic and political challenges to achieve a healthy public order. The list is the result of unanimous agreement by a representative committee on their recommendations of the best in the field for children, young people, and adults.

MICHA F. OPPENHEIM, Librarian
Paula K. Lazrus Library
of Intergroup Relations

ADULT LIST

Selected by . . .

MARY C. HATCH, Head Librarian, Central Circulation, The New York Public Library.

J. OSCAR LEE, Director, Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, National Council of Churches.

JOHN LEO, Associate Editor, Commonweal.

MARC H. TANENBAUM, Director, Interreligious Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee.

DORIS VIACAVA, Assistant Librarian, Iona College, New Rochelle, New York.

This selection from the complete list is presented by the publishers named below

ADULT LIST

America Is Different; The Search for Jewish Indentity, by Stuart E. Rosenberg. Nelson. $4.50.

A study of the growth and development of Judaism's efforts to retain its unique character in America. The evolution of American national character, growth of centers of Jewish life and thought, integration of immigrants, rise of Jewish denominationalism, and the evolving pattern of Jewish culture are examined.

Black, White and Gray; 21 Points of View on the Race Question, edited by Bradford Daniel. Sheed & Ward. $5.95.

Deeply divergent viewpoints are presented by these Negro, white, Southern, non-Southern, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish authors. They enable the reader to probe, analyze, and judge his own heart and conscience on this moral problem.

Crisis in Black and White, by Charles E. Silberman. Random House. $5.95.

A diagnosis of America's racial ills emphasizing serious problems of self-identity resulting from 300 years of Negro suppression. While favoring programs designed to improve social conditions, the author suggests efforts to develop local Negro leadership which would create the necessary positive identity and sense of pride resulting from full participation in life's decisions.

In the Midst of Plenty; The Poor in America, by Ben. H. Bagdikian. Beacon Press. $4.50.

A sympathetic portrait of America's poor, based on the author's own encounters with poverty in rural and city slums, Indian reservations, and migrant camps.

The Mind of the Catholic Layman, by Daniel Callahan. Scribners. $3.95.

The historical and present situation of the American Catholic layman's role in our democratic society is analyzed. Issues such as clergy and laity, free speech in the church, pluralism and ecclesiastical authority are discussed.

Mr. Kennedy and the Negroes, by Harry Golden. World. $4.95.

An informative analysis of the entire civil rights movement in America, and an in-depth study of President Kennedy's total commitment and efforts on behalf of that social revolution. Advancing the idea that those who have resisted change will be the greatest beneficiaries of Negro equality, the author dwells on the economic, social and political causes and effects of segregation, the role of the churches, brutalization of Southern Negroes, and the high price Southern whites pay in order to sustain outdated traditions.

Observer in Rome; A Protestant Report on the Vatican Council, by Robert McAfee Brown. Doubleday. $4.95

A sympathetic and warm account by an official observer to the second session of the Vatican Council, written with clarity and humor. A clear understanding of the basic challenges that face the church and a guide to the deeper meaning of the major issues under debate are here provided.

The Quiet Battle; Writings on the Theory and Practice of Non-violent Resistance, edited by Mulford Q. Sibley. Anchor Books. $1.45.

An attempt to demonstrate that there is an alternative to violence, both for purposes of external defense and in correcting social injustice. Included are essays dealing with the foundations and theoretical problems of non-violence, and case studies of both planned and spontaneous communal non-violence.

Rabbi and Minister; The Friendship of Stephen S. Wise and John Haynes Holmes, by Carl Hermann Voss. World. $6.95.

The story of a unique relationship between two great American clergymen, bent on making religion relevant to an era of social change. Both were engaged in public causes, championing freedom, equality and justice at home and abroad.

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CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLES LIST

Selected by . . .

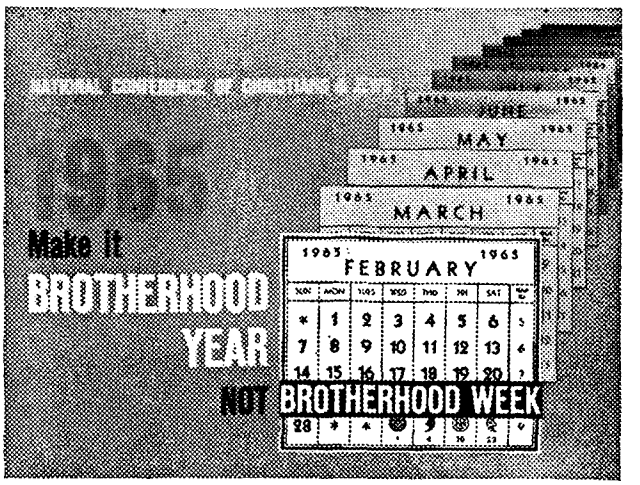
ELIZABETH ALLSTROM, writer of Christian Education materials for children.

AUGUSTA BAKER, Coordinator of Children's Services, The New York Public Library.

JOSETTE FRANK, Director for Children's Books, Child Study Association of America.

NORA KRAMER, Consultant on Books for Children and Young People, the Bookplan.

ETHNA SHEEHAN, Instructor in children's and adolescent literature, St. John's University.



For the complete Books for Brotherhood list write to
The National Conference of Christians and Jews, 43 W. 57th St., New York, N. Y. 10019

Religious Conflict in America; Studies of the Problems Beyond Bigotry, edited by Earl Raab. Anchor Books. $1.25.

A collection of essays by sociologists and theologians on the nature of interreligious conflict in America today. Various aspects of interreligious differences, the religious-secular conflict, and church-state problems are discussed.

The Religious Press in America, by Martin E. Marty, John G. Deedy, Jr., David W. Silverman, and Robert Lekachman. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. $4.00.

Critical essays on the successes and failures of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish newspapers and magazines. The authors analyze the audiences reached and the pressures and problems which weaken the impact of religious media.

The Teaching of Contempt; Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism, by Jules Isaac. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. $4.00.

A French-Jewish historian examines and refutes three theses which in his opinion have contributed to anti-Semitic doctrine: "The Dispersion of the Jews as Punishment for the Crucifixion," "The Degenerate State of Judaism at the Time of Jesus," and "The Crime of Deicide."

Ten Years of Prelude; The Story of Integration Since the Supreme Court's 1954 Decision, by Benjamin Muse. Viking Press. $5.00.

A readable account of changing Southern attitudes toward the 1954 school desegregation decision. Documenting initial defiance, both legal and violent, by politicians and segregationists, the author traces shifts in sentiment which have led to minimal efforts to comply with the law.

They and We; Racial and Ethnic Relations in the United States, by Peter I. Rose. Random House. $1.95.

An introduction to the sociology of intergroup relations, including a history of American minority groups. The successes and failures of various programs for integrating disparate peoples are discussed along with an examination of the nature of prejudice, the causes and consequences of intergroup conflict and the reaction of minorities to differential and discriminatory treatment. Includes selected annotated readings.

The following books are recommended for further study to persons wishing to investigate the deeper implications of present day intergroup relationships.

Assimilation in American Life; The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin, by Milton M. Gordon. Oxford University Press. $5.25; paper $2.50.

A theory of group life is developed in this sociological study of the assimilation of minority groups in the U.S. Implications for intergroup relations and suggestions for achieving a healthy balance between societal, subgroup and individual needs are offered.

Strangers Next Door; Ethnic Relations in American Communities, by Robin M. Williams. Prentice-Hall. $12.00.

A foremost authority on intergroup tensions in American society presents the results of eight years' research on behavior and attitudes in relations among racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the U.S.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLES LIST

A Boy of Old Prague, by Sulamith Ish-Kishor. Pantheon. $3.95. 10-12.

Feudal cruelty and prejudices surround a 16th century Jewish ghetto in a profoundly moving story of a young boy's growth in love and understanding.

Ellen and the Gang, by Frieda Friedman. Morrow. $2.95. 10-12.

A city housing project is the setting for this lively story of a little girl whose first brush with a group of teenage delinquents helps her find her way to more satisfying experiences.

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WHAT IS THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS?

NCCJ is a civic organization engaged in a nation-wide program of intergroup education. It enlists Protestants, Catholics and Jews who without compromise of conscience or of their distinctive and important religious differences work together to build better relationships among men of all religions, races and nationalities. Its operation is civic and social although, obviously, the roots of the brotherhood which it seeks to build are in the moral law and in religious faith.

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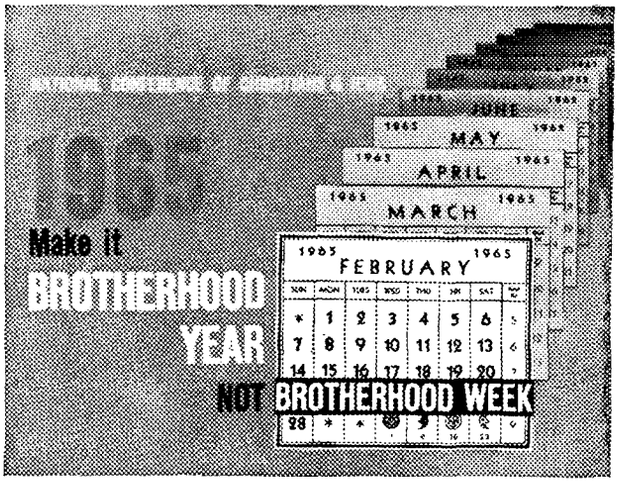

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIST (Continued)

Galumph, by Brenda Lansdown. Houghton Mifflin. $3.00. 4-8.

Galumph, a golden cat, roams the city block, responds to four names, unites four neighbors in a special friendship and provides for the reader a delightful surprise.

People I'd Like to Keep, by Mary O'Neill. Doubleday. $2.95. 6-9.

A child's thoughts and feelings about people in her everyday life—the teacher, the doctor, the charwoman, the bakery man—in sensitive verse that is both gay and moving. Pictures catch the moods.

Roosevelt Grady, by Louisa R. Shotwell. World. $2.95. 10-12.

The difficulties and aspirations of a Negro family of migrant workers and their small boy who yearns for, and finally achieves, a place to stay and a full term of schooling.

She Wore A Star, by Dorothy Bonnell. Julian Messner. $2.95. 12-15.

A thoughtful novel of a young girl working with the American Friends Service in India at the time of its new freedom from British rule. She finds that her experiences have prepared her for further service at home, to bring understanding of India and its people to her own compatriots.

The Skies of Crete, by James Forman. Farrar, Straus. $2.95. 11-14.

A stirring, moving tale of the days in Crete before the encroaching war enveloped it. At its core is a boy's deep reaction to war already experienced and soon to be part of his life again with the Nazi invader.

The Takula Tree, by Elizabeth P. Fleming. Westminster Press. $3.25. 10-12.

An American missionary and his family are caught between two factions in an African village uprising, and are saved by devoted students and helpers. When the mission school and church are destroyed by fire and the Americans are forced to leave, these loyal natives rebuild and carry on the school until the promised return of its leader.

That Bad Carlos, by Mina Lewiton. Harper & Row. $3.25. 10-12.

An understanding Puerto Rican family help their son through some troubled adventures as they all learn to cope with new ways of living in the big city of New York.

Tiger Burning Bright, by Theodora DuBois. Farrar, Straus. $3.25. 12-16.

Anne Burney is a governess in Delhi when the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 plunges the city into anarchy and terror. How this American girl conducts a group of white children and adults to safety makes a suspenseful and colorful story which emphasizes the underlying brotherhood of different races and faiths.

The Tomato Patch, by William Wondriska. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. $3.50. 6-8.

Who could have guessed that the sight and taste of homely tomatoes would signal the beginning of a new way of life for the armor-plated kingdoms of Krullerburg and Appletainia? The sly humor in story and pictures conveys a significant lesson.

The Vengeance of Abel Wright, by Clifford L. Alderman. Doubleday. $2.95. 11-14.

This New England colonial boy has ample reason for his hatred of King Philip of the Wampanoags. But his bitterness gradually turns to understanding and sympathy as he realizes that Philip is fighting to preserve his people from annihilation.

Welcome Child, by Pearl S. Buck. John Day. $3.95. 5-10.

The several months in which a little Korean orphan girl becomes truly a part of her new American family and an American citizen besides. Remarkable photographs on every page accompany Pearl Buck's loving account of one child's experience in being adopted.

Who Wants Music on Monday?, by Mary Stolz. Harper & Row. $3.50. 12 and up.

Four young people, one a Negro, struggle to find values in a confused world.

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The imprimatur today

'LET IT BE PRINTED'

ELIZABETH BARTELME

The *imprimatur*, like the Index of Forbidden Books, is an offshoot of the Reformation, and, like the latter, was originally meant to keep heretical printed matter out of the hands of the faithful. As the Latin makes clear, it was simply "permission to print." Systematized and codified under Pope Leo XIII, the *imprimatur* is now an indication that a book has been examined by a qualified censor who has declared it free from doctrinal or moral error by giving the book his *nihil obstat*, and that the bishop of the diocese in which the book is either written, published or printed, basing his judgment on the censor's report, has given permission to publish. It is interesting to observe the shift in the original meaning: books privately printed and distributed do not now need an *imprimatur*.

One of the most common misunderstandings about this permission is that its appearance in a book constitutes the seal of the approval of the bishop who grants it. This has never been true, although it is a misconception dear to the hearts of publishers' sales representatives and has spawned some remarkably demented book advertising. It is also a source of annoyance to bishops who do not necessarily wish to be identified with the ideas of an author. Certain bishops, in fact ask publishers to print carefully worded disclaimers beside the *imprimatur*.

Another misconception, this one common to anxious writers, is that every Catholic who puts a line on paper must have it censored. The results are headaches for the censors, and certain literary works carrying tiny six-point lines of type that are quite unnecessary. Novels, poetry, literary essays, biographies and similar works do not fall within the censor's competence. But quite a few other books do, specifically, any work, written by a Catholic, on theology, Sacred Scripture, religion, natural theology and ethics, Church history, an *ex professo* treatment of a moral or religious topic, or a subject involving religious discipline, one dealing with politics (more common in Europe than in this country) or with economics (federal aid to education might illustrate the latter), or books on secular or profane matters which because of the treatment of the subject might come within the competence of the censor.

Who must obtain an *imprimatur*? All Catholics, lay or religious, writing on any of the above subjects. Only bishops are exempt from this regulation, and, I have been told, most of those who write will submit their work to a censor even though they are not required to do so. And the obligation of the censor? He must give a competent, unbiased report, leaving aside his own point of view on any matter which he is judging, and taking into account only the moral and doctrinal elements involved.

Searching for "Soft" Censors

What, in fact, actually happens in the censorship of books? Frequently, nothing at all. An author or a publisher may submit galleys to the diocesan censor and have them returned completely unmarked or with only a few minor corrections. This is the norm rather than the exception. It is the exceptions, however, that raise questions about the validity of pre-publication censorship. How valid, for example, is censorship when a *nihil obstat* is refused by one censor and granted by another? Which is the more competent theologian—the one who passes the book or the one who refuses to? How should a writer or an editor react to a censor who indulges a passion for copy-editing?—a niggling question, but it involves a niggling passion and an affront to the writer.

Again, how valid is this kind of censorship when publishers shop around for an "easy" censor? It is common knowledge that certain dioceses are notably lenient about book censorship while others make a point of being difficult. In neither diocese will the *censor librorum* necessarily be a specialist in all fields in which he may be expected to exercise judgment and so the publisher turns canny. He sends the easy books to the "hard" censor, and the difficult works to the "easy" man. Not very pretty, but the books get out and this is of some importance to the author and the publisher. Of course the publisher may choose to take the middle path and submit a book for an *imprimatur* to the censor in one of the larger dioceses. Should he do so he will have a much better chance of having a specialist examine the book since a diocese in which many publishers maintain their businesses have a board of censors who are specialists in various areas, and who, in some cases, make special provisions for examining particular books.

At this point, though, another problem may arise. Delays!

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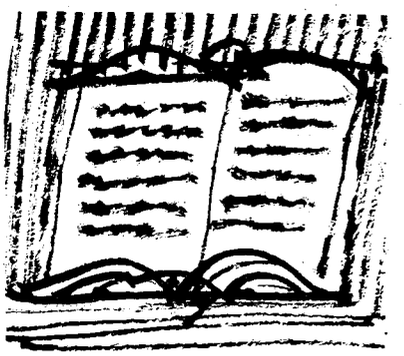
The publisher's nightmare! Will the censor return the book in three weeks? He might. Will the printer keep the presses open if the publisher is late in returning page proofs? Most certainly he won't. Will the author be amenable when he discovers that his book has been postponed from fall until spring? No, he will depart to the haven of another, more sympathetic publisher who will soothe him with optimistic promises until once again the stormy waves of censorship move his book from fall to spring.

Lest anyone unacquainted with the vagaries of publishing and of censorship think this is exaggerated, let me illustrate. A continental theologian of some repute had his book accepted for American publication. The book had been published in several languages, each time with an *imprimatur*. The American publisher had had the translation made by a translator who was not a Catholic. This earned him a first rejection. (Only Catholics may translate Catholic books—but more of this later.) Since "shopping around" gives a certain latitude vis-à-vis the printing of the book, the publisher submitted galleys to the diocesan censor of the area where the book had been printed. The *imprimatur* was refused. The publisher then had the text reset in type, at an enormous expense to himself, in another part of the country and resubmitted the book. At this point the *imprimatur* was granted, but only after the publisher had accepted the fact that he would lose money on the book, that he would not satisfy the author, and that, in the end, ecumenism would have a sour look on the balance sheet. Incidentally, this particular book was finally published more than a year behind schedule.

The publisher who brought out this book was a general book publisher, and I am not in a position to judge whether or not any of the difficulties recorded were as much his doing as the censor's (and of course I realize and state, before it is brought to my attention, as it has been, that censors are not performing their duties to help publishers make money). Nevertheless, those publishers who bring out Catholic books exclusively, and who devote themselves to this work, encounter the same kind of problem, and are handicapped by the very fact that they are Catholic publishers.

An absurdity? Not at all. Catholic publishers, who represent themselves as such, are bound to obtain the *imprimatur* on any book which canon law indicates requires such a permission. General publishers, however, are not bound by any such requirement since they do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Church. A Catholic author, of course, must obey the law of the Church and the dictates of his conscience, but the general publisher may love God and do as he pleases. If this sounds frivolous, it is not meant to be. Those who have actively put themselves at the service of the Church are often penalized; those who publish for purely commercial reasons cannot be.

This, however, can work in reverse. In many dioceses a translation from a foreign language, unless the translator is a Catholic, will not be given an *imprimatur*. The translation may be accurate, beautiful and completely in accord with the original, but unless the translator professes the faith, his translation cannot be published with permission. Here again it is a matter of jurisdiction. No one who is not a Catholic is bound by the laws of the Church. *Ipso*, a bishop may not (although it has been known to happen) give permission to publish to one who is not of his flock. And this, despite the anguished cries of editors and salesmen, seems completely reasonable. (But a word of advice to the intrepid author or editor: one *can* get around this by applying to the Ordinary of the diocese in which the book was first published and given an *imprimatur*, and ask to have authority delegated to the Ordinary of the diocese in which the translation is being published or printed.)



It is tempting to illustrate the various problems connected with obtaining an *imprimatur* with case histories—"the case of the censor who locked up an office filled with galleys and went off for the summer," "the case of the censor who . . .," etc., etc.—but this is not an exposé. It is more important and more to the point to examine the purpose of the *imprimatur*, and to try to make a judgment as to whether it is being fulfilled. The purpose of pre-publication censorship, I have been told, is to protect the reader. The reader, however, does not wish to be protected. If he is interested in a particular work he will read it, and if he is an intelligent man (and he is likely to be if he is browsing in theology, Scripture studies and natural law) he is rarely concerned with whether or not the writer has asked permission to publish. The most obvious example of this lack of concern is the wide circulation of the works of Teilhard de Chardin, none of which bears an *imprimatur*. (One might note here the censorious attitude that was taken toward the private circulation of some of Teilhard's papers before publication when an *imprimatur* was not needed.) One could cite other works in the areas of Church history or books which deal, at least incidentally, with theological or moral matters, in which the *imprimatur* has not appeared and which have nevertheless found a wide readership even among subscribers to Catholic book clubs.

Further, I think it would be astonishing to most Catholics to discover that a work dealing with certain areas of politics or economics requires the approval of a *censor librorum*. It is difficult to imagine a trained economist or political theorist submitting his work to the scrutiny of a

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theologian, and even harder to imagine that a reader would shun such a work because the author has not requested permission to publish. And as for those secular and profane matters—well, at best the wording is vague.

None of this proves, of course, that the *imprimatur* has no value. What it does indicate, however, is that those whom it was designed to protect feel no need for it; are truly unaware of it. It would therefore seem to follow that the *imprimatur* has lost its usefulness.

There is a larger issue, however, than usefulness. The past decade has seen what can only be described as a revolution in the Church. *Aggiornamento* has brought together men of differing beliefs, and freedom of inquiry has become the basis for understanding between them. Censorship, no matter how carefully or discreetly exercised, has overtones of repression, and when it is badly handled it becomes a scandal and a reproach. Then, too, censorship does not exist in a vacuum. It springs from fear and expresses a defensive mentality. It indicates that alarums are being sounded from every bell tower and that the enemy is at the gates. But are we at war? Must we be so defensive, so circumspect, so frightened of ideas? Does it really advance truth to let the work of seminal scholars be mutilated or left to gather dust on a shelf because a censor does not approve a man's ideas or feels that his thinking is too avant garde? It has happened, although in fairness it should be pointed out that censors appointed by religious orders are greater culprits in this respect than are diocesan censors.

What is really called for, or so it seems to me, is the freedom to make a mistake. A mistake is not a catastrophe, and even censors have been known to stumble. When one considers *imprimaturs* that have been granted and later withdrawn, or the granting of an *imprimatur* here when it has been refused there, one can hardly be blamed for developing certain skeptical attitudes. (Germany, I am told, has a more efficient system. If one bishop refuses his *imprimatur*, by agreement no other German bishop will grant it. It appears that Americans, in the midst of their confusion, are freer.) If a censor makes an error in judgment he is protected both by his position and by his anonymity (prior to publication). The writer does not know who is judging his work, whether the critic is competent, sympathetic or hypercritical. If the writer were allowed to publish without pre-publication censorship, any criticism of his work would be aired publicly, and the writer himself would be better able to judge its fairness.

As it is, pre-publication censorship develops a psychology of fear, particularly in priests. It is not an atmosphere in which ideas flourish, and I don't think we can afford to cultivate atmospheres or attitudes that discourage freedom of thought. And, although the *imprimatur* is designed primarily to protect the reader, its chief effect is on the writer. In short it is not effective in its initial function. I take my stand with a theologian who remarked, "If a man is competent in his field, his competence should be the only *imprimatur* needed."

THE PRICE OF LEMONS

THE STAGE

Unless these gimlet eyes deceive me, the only Broadway opening for three weeks (note: to synchronize our watches on this, you have to subtract the time it takes—weeks, months, your guess is as good as mine—to glue this magazine together) has been something called "Boeing-Boeing." And I'm damned if I'm going to devote a whole column to something called "Boeing-Boeing."

It is fresh evidence of how things stand on Broadway, that after waiting three tremulous weeks for something to happen, you find yourself watching a farce about air-hostesses. It is like a roll of drums heralding Mickey Mouse. Even a great farce about air-hostesses would be pretty dispiriting in the circumstances: and it so happens that a great farce about air-hostesses is virtually out of the question. I cannot think of a subject that less lends itself to humor. The Scout Movement, UNESCO—anything would be better than air-hostesses.

And yet, one continues to hope: the phrase "Broadway Opening" retains a sneaky, incantatory power. If "Boeing-Boeing" were a movie, showing in a cold theater on a hot day (or in a hot theater on a cold day) one would cheerfully surrender one's dollar and a quarter and, when the smoke had cleared, not feel cheated by more than about fifty cents. After laboring asthmatically through its establishing scenes, "B. B." becomes a pleasantly routine farce, with doors opening and slamming, maids resigning, lechery thwarted—to say more about the plot would be already to exaggerate its importance: it is simply a ruse to get people into their pajamas.

But six dollars and something is a lot to pay for a seventy-five cent anaesthetic, and one has to wonder whether Broadway hasn't priced itself out of this very mild sort of entertainment. Until this message seeps into the right places, it might help if critics would cease their infernal raving and panning and start evaluating shows in terms of hard cash—a good two dollars worth here; fifty cents is more than enough for this baby; and so on. A special annual prize could be given to the play that comes closest to the actual price on the ticket.

This form of poetic would not keep the audience from feeling abysmally cheated, but it would enable it to gauge its expectations with greater precision. It is bad enough to have to pay seven or eight clams without expecting seven or eight clams worth of play and not getting it. (Further refinements on this plan might also bring in the city's discomfort register—how bad does the weather have to be for this play to be a worthwhile refuge? How harassed and emotionally starved should the ideal customer be feeling that night? etc.)

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At present, the spread between expectation and performance is the only tragedy playing on Broadway. The effort to bring shows within range of their asking price induces a climate of perpetual strain. Plays, as we have had many occasions to note, tend to be over-produced and over-directed. They are cluttered with devices, gags-within-gags, as if entertainment was quantitative, and as if a meter was running remorselessly against it. A quiet, understated play *might* be worth seven bucks to some people—but what about the ones who missed the point? Wouldn't they be up in arms?

They probably would, because the meter runs for them too. The price of a theater-evening is something they may have managed to push from consciousness, with a mighty effort. But if things go too slowly and quietly, it will come scratching back. What am I, crazy? Fourteen dollars, for an *allegory*? The result is a jittery customer, in no shape for nuances.

Nor am I talking here of the headstrong glutton, who arrives twenty minutes late in a state of befuddlement, and wearing somebody else's overcoat; or of the householder fretting about baby-sitters and last busses; but of the others (if there are any others), the people who have simply paid for their tickets, and have come to the theater by magic carpet.

Even these must battle a rising tide of frustration at most plays. Because the price-tag is a symbol as well as a nuisance. It is what the play thinks it is worth. And the big claim heightens the atmosphere: it is part of Broadway's famous electricity. This isn't grocery money, it is magic money, the stuff that a Diamond Jim Brady flashes for the sake of sheer excitement. It raises the ante on the playwright's hand.

This kind of razzle-dazzle is justified by the occasional musical spectacular—$100 a seat for "My Fair Lady" quickens the blood, adds to the necessary delirium. But most plays don't breathe this air, and shouldn't be asked to. The spectacularizing effects—the sets, the costumes, the souped-up dialogue—jar like cheap make-up with the average basic script; jar, also, like the exclamation marks the admen slap onto the critics' quotes. These effects can make the humblest plays look flashy and pretentious, proto-extravaganzas trying to live up to their extravaganza prices.

I don't know enough about the subject to quarrel with basic Broadway economics. Presumably, the tickets are as cheap as they can be—the playgoer must simply resign himself to a certain disproportion here. But I can't help feeling that it would cool the air, and give plays like, what's its name, "Boeing-Boeing," a better chance if playgoers were accosted with signs in the lobby saying, "a bargain at $1.99!" (Watts), "not one cent more than $1.35!!" (Taubman)—in other words, an evaluation in terms of real purchasing power.

As it stands, the critics, who go to the theater for nothing, are seeing plays under vitally different circumstances from other people: they are missing a crucial part of the evening's emotion: to put it briefly, they do not feel as if they had been robbed blind as they stumble out into the night. *(At the Cort)*

WILFRID SHEED

BACK TO THE WASTE LAND

THE SCREEN

At the end of his last film, "The Eclipse," Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni forced us, with views of a modern housing project, to contemplate for several minutes the arid life which modern man has built for himself. In his new movie, Antonioni goes further. All of "The Red Desert" shows the waste land in which man is suffocating. This subject of sterility, the arid environment man has created for himself, and the effect of it in man's lack of communication and real love, is a favorite of Antonioni—as we have seen in his last three pictures: "L'Avventura" and "La Notte" along with "The Eclipse." But in "The Red Desert," he goes to town on this theme.

The story, in the screenplay written by Antonioni and Tonino Guerra, is simple enough—almost too simple and little more than a lengthy character sketch of a neurotic woman who is having difficulty adjusting to life after a nervous breakdown that followed an automobile accident. Although films about psychopaths are usually difficult to keep up with unless there's a psychiatrist character with a few handy explanations (and in "The Red Desert" there is none), it soon becomes apparent that there's much more to the woman's troubles than the woman herself. The people around her and the environment are contributing factors. And the film has a great deal to say about these.

The setting is the industrial area near Ravenna where the woman's husband works as an engineer in one of those slick factories complete with enormous machines and pipes and tubes and aerial equipment and chemicals and fiercely-blowing steam. The apartment where they live with their little son is equally slick and functional. And the out-of-doors in this factory district, with its views of belching plants, stagnant pools of colored chemicals, and a foggy, desolate water front, adds to the dismal man-made background. The people, themselves, in this stifling atmosphere seem stifled—and yearning for they know not what.

The camera concentrates mostly on Monica Vitti who is more beautiful than ever in this stunning color film and once again turns in a good performance under Antonioni's direction as she gropes her way to reconstruct a life for herself. Her husband (Carlo Chionetti) is not particularly helpful or loving in a marriage that is sliding along through a dry period. Her little son, who needs perhaps more spankings and more loving, plays the meanest of tricks on her

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by complaining of aching legs and inability to walk; although, for a while, this attention-getting game takes the woman out of herself. Her husband's friend (Richard Harris looking less attractive in color than he did in "This Sporting Life"), a discontented rich man, offers her friendship and then love which turns sour. And her other friends, who in one long scene loll around synthetically discussing sex, are even more superficial and unhelpful.

"The Red Desert" offers no solution to the sterility trap we have got ourselves into. And two hours of the problem get rather long. It does, however, have some very good filmmaking and Antonioni's use of color (his first) is magnificent. He presents scene after scene of incredible beauty—pictures as lovely as many one sees in an art gallery. And the color is used for meaning as well as pictorial effect. In some cases symbolic, the color of clothes and rooms even changes to set the mood of the character and theme. Whether or not you agree that modern man has made an inescapable waste land of his environment and he damn well better do something about it, "The Red Desert" is a visual treat not to be missed. It suggests marvelous new possibilities for color in cinema. Furthermore the film's theme is worthy of consideration.

Nicolai Gogol's long short story *The Overcoat*, often said to be the beginning of realism in Russian literature (Dostoevsky even went so far as to insist "we've all issued from *The Overcoat*") has been made into a movie again. It is a fascinating tale about a grubby, elderly clerk who slaves and saves to buy a new overcoat—and when he wears it for the first time, he adores it almost passionately. He becomes a new, rejuvenated man. But on that first night, the coat is stolen. Gogol's story has warmth, satiric humor, cruel realism, and haunting beauty. And this Russian film, made in 1959 by director Alexi Batalov, catches well the feel of the story. Roland Bykov is first-rate as the impoverished, hard-working clerk, and he breaks our hearts with the sweet-sad tale. I'm not sure that this tale can be sustained throughout a full-length movie, but this new telling definitely merits your attention. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

BOOKS

What the theologians are saying

WILLIAM BIRMINGHAM

Hans Küng's image of the Church as an ecumenical council convoked by God—and of Vatican II as one called by men—is salutary because it suggests that all will not be lost should the council of bishops fail. The council of men is a moment and opportunity. Moments pass and opportunities fade, a process painful to behold but not inevitably fatal to the organism. The image, then, cautions us against great expectations. Vatican II is as likely to be paternalistic (recall the statement on mass communications) as it is to be adventurous (collegiality, a genuine doctrinal development, leaps to mind). The bishops are most apt, given the good and ill of Christian life, to ratify the obvious: as they have done in reforming the liturgy and exculpating Jews of deicide; as they will do in proclaiming what we have known all along, that religious liberty is a good thing. We may rejoice that the council in Rome has proved that the Church institutional can change. Given the nature of institutions, however, we should not expect that the changes will meet our greatest hopes.

Küng's *Structures of the Church* (Nelson, $7.50) evokes the reader's sense of freedom in relation to the Church institutional, a freedom that heightens commitment because it eliminates confusion of external with internal forms, of the empirical with the transcendent Church.

Let me give an example: the college of cardinals has long seemed to me an unnecessary institution; Küng enables me to see that it is external form and so no cause for speculative indignation, though subject of course to empirical judgment. What reality of the transcendent Church does the college of cardinals mirror? In what sense might we say of the college of cardinals that its existence is valid because it, too, represents the ecumenical council convoked by God? Perhaps we might profitably convoke other "little" councils, a council of theologians, for instance.

Let us extend Küng's initial image and view the recent works of theologians as if they were schemata submitted for our ratification. There is *hubris* involved, to be sure, in suggesting that each man endow himself with charism and office. But there is advantage in being able to relegate the institutional problems that necessarily preoccupy bishops to the corner they properly occupy in the lives of most Christians. There is further advantage in the fact that, where bishops are pretty much confined in their decrees to principles, the council I propose can come closer to enunciating what Karl Rahner in *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (Herder & Herder, paper, $2.75) calls "prescriptions that are practically and morally important for the individual and for states and nations."

Even the best of theologians, needless to say, cannot prescribe exactly how an American husband should be generous to his wife at three o'clock next Tuesday afternoon. (Only the neurotic look for that kind of prescription.) But, if he perseveres in reading

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Rahner's great essay on "The Logic of Concrete Individual Conscience in Ignatius Loyola," he will find himself possessed of the tools with which to shape his own moral decisions. This essay may simply confuse, because it contains the obscurity that total precision often breeds.

In that event, our American would better make an act of trust in the aid of the Spirit to his conscience and turn to Rahner's *Inquiries* (Herder & Herder, $8.00), in which are gathered five of the earlier *quaestiones disputatae* volumes. It includes *The Church and the Sacraments*, a work awe-inspiring in the subtlety with which it handles the concept of *opus operatum*. Negatively, Rahner admits that a sacrament confers "God's grace without the subjective merit of the minister or the recipient of the sign"; but he stresses the positive content of *opus operatum*, "the unambiguous, abiding promise irrevocably made by God, and as such recognizable and historically manifest, of grace for the individual human being . . ." *Inquiries* is indispensable.

Rahner's theology is prescriptive of thought more than of action. A pragmatic American, therefore, turns gratefully to Charles Davis' *Sacraments of Initiation* (Sheed & Ward, $3.50). The sacraments, he says, "are not inanimate things like charms; they are not magical rites to be repeated without understanding; they are the activity of the Church as a community. Hence they are marked by her history. The vicissitudes of her life are reflected in the history of her sacraments." Davis describes the muddy state of theological thought concerning confirmation and surveys the proposals to settle things once and for all by choosing a uniform age at which a more-or-less univocally defined confirmation should be administered. He rejects proposals for uniformity and, with Anglo-Saxon good sense, suggests that each culture develop a liturgy of confirmation suited to its own pastoral needs. It is a pleasure to have a permissive theologian at our council.

Adrienne von Speyr and her book *Confession* (Herder & Herder, $4.75) are welcome, too, not solely because it seems right to have a woman participate fully but because it is a joy to have her participate so well. Speyr's description of confession as based on the Trinity is not soon forgotten: "God stands before God in the attitude that befits God." From this confession of self-revelation among the Divine Persons arises "an ever new relationship of vision and love." Similarly, in sacramental confession, "we aim at opening ourselves fully, acknowledging ourselves as what we are, so as to experience God equally fully, and out of this experience to order our lives anew." The depth of insight is consistently profound, though it is difficult to see how the confession here described can even be mimicked in the dark cupboards at the backs and sides of our churches.

No council can do without a moral theologian—although the idea is tempting, as even the best occasionally become engrossed with tying moral shoelaces. Our council is fortunate to have Bernard Häring represented by *Christian Renewal in a Changing World* (Desclée, $6.75). The law of Christ, he tells us, is news of great joy, an invitation to blessedness through participation in the love internal to the triune God. (Ironically, just as Bishop Pike is jettisoning the Trinity, Catholic thinkers are rediscovering the riches of this doctrine.) A theological age ago (in 1950, say) a biblical and personalistic moral theology would have sounded like a contradiction in terms.

Under the influence of Häring, all this has changed: such concepts as *encounter* are commonplace and biblical passages other than the story of Onan are considered significant for moral behavior. Häring even goes so far as to locate this popular *summa* of his thought in the Sermon on the Mount, whose promises of happiness contradict all common sense and epitomize the freedom of Christian love. One need not agree with every detail (Häring has a hard time with such juridical sins as eating meat on Friday) to hope that this book receives widespread attention.

A council of bishops may, in its decrees, advocate the one, the true, and the good; but in official language these never seem to imply the beautiful. Nor is beautiful an adjective one might expect to use at a more informal council of theologians. But we can, and can use it accurately, to describe the overwhelming impression of Elmer O'Brien's *Varieties of Mystic Experience* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $7.50). We find erudition, urbanity, and wisdom in O'Brien's thought and style; but it is the beauty of what he and his mystics have to say that pervades the whole and gives to mystic experience a unity that the title refuses to impose. There is much to praise in this book: the author's splendid translation of Pseudo-Dionysius, all the more commendable in view of his conviction that "pseudo-" is totally appropriate as a description of this Dionysius; the graceful introductions, such as that to Julian of Norwich, whose soul "was as lightsome and orderly and ordinary as a farmhouse kitchen, swept, shining, warmly redolent of familiar human living, with something — eminently practical and savory—bubbling away on the hob."

Above all, there is the quality of O'Brien's interpretation; he convinces us that the gnostic and the arcane have small place in mystic experience. Indeed, fittingly from a Jesuit perhaps, Ignatius Loyola's experience emerges as the center whence understanding of the rest radiates. Loyola, more active than the average businessman or teacher or public servant, remained all the while a man who "could *experience* God's presence almost at will." There is available here "an insight into reality which is valid for every time or place or condition." Laymen dissatisfied with the monastic forms often proposed for their emulation will want to ponder that insight, with an eye to discerning its validity for them.

A second theologian concerned with beauty may constitute a groundswell of theological humanism. Let us hope so. (However much admiration Rahner's thought merits, it has all the esthetic attraction of a report from a theological data-processing machine.) That second theologian is at our council: Hans Urs von Balthasar, who subsumes the con-

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ventional analytic approach to theology in an integrating vision. "The loss of the erotic element of the Canticle and of the esthetic element of the dionysian writings has resulted," he tells us, "in a dessication of theology." (An example of what he means occurred not long ago at an American university. Jean Leclercq, author of *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, proposed that prayer might be considered a category of theological endeavor. With no perceptible trace of irony, a priest in the audience asked what then would become of the Thomist ideal of theology as a science. Leclercq replied that the question was interesting, because it would never be asked by a scientist: "Physicists seem to know what I mean.")

Balthasar incarnates his theology. His realistic imagination forges patterns rather than arguments, evokes personal assent rather than mere logical agreement. He suggests that a Christian task may be the re-mythologizing of our world (Diana has become a target for missiles), not by resurrecting old imagery but by exploring with Christian vision a world charged with divine power. The beautiful "will only return to us if the power of the Christian heart intervenes so strongly between the other world salvation of theology and the present world lost in positivism as to experience the cosmos as the revelation of an infinity of grace and love—not merely to believe but to experience it." A superficial reading might suggest that Balthasar is ready to dispense in *Word and Revelation* (Herder & Herder, $3.95) with such positivistic methods as scientific exegesis. Closer study shows that he has given them their indispensable place in a broader, poetic vision. Anyone who has found more of God in Dante, Shakespeare, or Joyce than in a shelf full of conventional theology will delight in O'Brien and Balthasar.

An informal council will also want to consider doctrines that are in a state of rapid development. There is a pragmatic reason: individual doctrines seem to develop rapidly during those periods when their meaning is immediately prophetic. Recently, the doctrine of the cosmic Christ has entered such a phase. For one thing, we have assimilated the concept of the Mystical Body sufficiently to realize our need to know more clearly how Christ permeates creation: mystical, it seems, is not the opposite of concrete. For another, there is the challenge of Teilhard de Chardin, whose Christology has forced the rethinking of old truths.

In *The Primacy of Christ* (Franciscan Herald Press, $4.95), Michael D. Meilach lays the groundwork for modern understanding of the ancient question: what was the motive for the Incarnation? Meilach leads the reader through the Thomist answer (redemption) and the Scotist (love independent of original sin), as well as their major historical variations. He does special service in the clarity of his presentation of Pauline teaching. This is a fine introduction and synthesis. It is all the more unfortunate, therefore, that Meilach has virtually ignored Teilhard de Chardin. There is danger, no doubt, in Teilhard's having extended the cosmic Christ to become the cosmological Christ. Yet this represents, I believe, a risk that our scientific age demands of theology. (Too few theologians are aware of the scientific sophistication of today's intelligent ninth-graders; these children share Teilhard's terms much as do solid-state physicists.)

Meilach avoids Teilhard on the grounds that his position contains "ambiguities," though he has amply demonstrated the ambiguities in Aquinas and Scotus. It is no surprise that, his historical work done, he elaborates an application of the doctrine of Christ's primacy to modern life that falls short (by a tragically narrow margin) of meeting contemporary needs. Responsible discussion is badly needed in book form: the reader is meanwhile directed to Christopher Mooney's masterful article, "The Body of Christ in the Writings of Teilhard de Chardin" (*Theological Studies*, December 1964).

There is, of course, every reason for caution in dealing with Teilhard, a fact of which even an informal council must be aware. It would be good to call on

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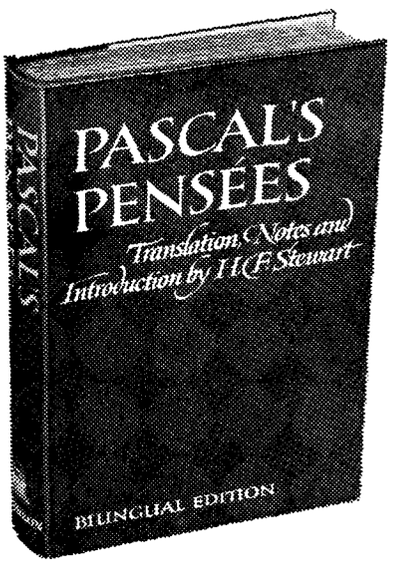

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PANTHEON BOOKS

Henri de Lubac's *La Pensée Religieuse de Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris:Aubier) for help. But the latest *monitum* concerning Teilhard followed closely on the publication of Lubac's book and English translation is less than imminent. We can turn, however, to Jean Mouroux's *The Mystery of Time* (Desclée, $5.50), a book that will undermine any tendency towards facile evolutionary optimism. Mouroux says that, in studying the nature of hope, he came to write about time. Teilhard, we know, discovered hope while exploring evolutionary time. Teilhard the evolutionist would have enjoyed these words of Mouroux the theologian: the Christian universe is "truly a universe in time, a human race in history—a world rising and growing toward God."

Where the mythical cosmogony of the pagans was one of repetition, salvation-history moves forward without loss of the past: "The Eucharist is a perfect example. It is repeated countless times every day. But it does not repeat the [original] act of sacrifice [by Christ]. Rather it is immersed in the salvific reality of this act. *It repeats this act symbolically . . .*" The historical past is thus brought into the present and the time of men becomes the time of Christ. Teilhard extends cosmic insight to the cosmological level: "And since the time when Jesus was born," he says in *The Future of Man* (Harper & Row, $5), "when he finished growing and died and rose again, *everything has continued to move because Christ has not yet completed his own forming.* He has not yet gathered in to himself the last folds of the Garment of flesh and love which his disciples are making for him. *The mystical Christ has not yet attained his full growth.* In the pursuance of this engendering is situated the ultimate spring of all created activity . . . Christ is the Fulfillment even of the natural evolution of beings." There must be something more than a fad in Teilhard's popularity (there are 50,000 copies of *The Future of Man* in print) despite the caution with which many quite open theologians approach him: perhaps it is this, that Teilhard has broken through into the modern world and carried with him all that is best of a past more variegated than most men had previously realized.

This all began with a suggestion that one might convoke councils other than the institutional and a hint that some essential truths will never receive a Denzinger number. Though less authoritative, these truths may be more important. The original suggestion sprang from my sense (quite mistaken, I hope) that considerable time is needed before the institutional Church can speak with the relevance of its theologians. There is too much to be done; we cannot wait for conciliar prescriptions to alleviate our every ill. We might better seize upon the religious genius of Vatican II—its boldness, its freedom, its willingness to change—and restrain our impatience for decrees. It is heroism in an institution to have any genius at all, and this is cause for optimism.

In *Catholicism: Religion of Tomorrow?* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $4.95) the French journalist Henri Fesquet faces the most disquieting question that can be asked of a Catholic: has the Church become the great harlot of the Apocalypse? "What the enemies of the Church forget," he replies, " . . . is that the harlots in the Gospel story received shattering favors and exceptional promises." He is closer to the institution than most of us and considers it supple enough to draw "its substance from all aspects of reality, not rejecting a single one." If enough people read Fesquet, he may prove his own argument. For the heart of his optimism can be found in the title of a talk that (he tells us) a Dominican gave to French soldiers during World War II: "The Church Is You!" Of such stuff are "little" councils made.

REVIEWERS

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The Two Nuns

ANNE HURE

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SISTER M. FRANZITA

FOR a short novel, *The Two Nuns* is at the least ambitious. At the center of conflict is Mother Hildegard, whose rigid interpretation of her authority as Abbess has brought her cloistered nuns to internal divisiveness and the Abbey under the scrutiny of Rome's Cardinal Prefect of Religious. The ending involves her "fall," "change," or "conversion," depending on one's interpretation of the novel's frame of reference. (Actually, "conversion" is incorrect. The novel treats matters of religious life, but not in their spiritual dimensions, properly speaking.)

It is ambitious in the variety of assaults it launches on contemporary targets within the sphere of freedom and authority: inter-personal relations gone awry in religious life; the individual's helplessness in face of a power structure based on the autonomy of a major superior; the official machinery of *Romanita;* psychological repressions of cloistered life; problems of intellectual fulfillment versus voluntaristic determination; the tension between the humane, aspiritual scholar and the austere rigidity of the Jansenistically submissive nuns. To that might be added assaults on the reader's emotions made by a kind of neurotic interpretation of the spiritual life, reinforced by external evidence of legalism in obedience, the cult of the superior's personality, psychological transference of youthful affections, the impotence of ecclesiastical machinery in face of an approved Rule, deaths under abnormal circumstances.

That is my principal quarrel with this book. Not that, thematically, such topics are not available to the novelist, nor that their external linking is so unskillfully handled. But, having such a rich lode, Miss Huré has mined it to such cross-purposes as to leave the multi-thematic possibilities unavailable to another writer for some time. How many novels on religious

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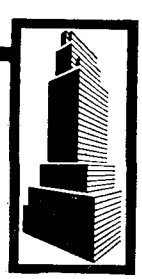

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life—at any level of sophistication—can a contemporary society absorb? That ferment of *materiel* contains a potential confrontation of powerful forces bearing on the very nature of spiritual freedom and the ordering of Providence. So I call it wasteful.

What comes off, with the vast cast of characters and the scope of the conflict, is energized not by the resources available to a novel but by contemporary concern for the issues. The religious in the foreground are well-educated and well-connected; their conversation is much too frequently the exchange of little verbal essays on Tertullian, dogma, skepticism, canonical election, the invulnerability of muddled minds. Most individual episodes are made probable, or at least plausible, but too much is only chronologically linked.

The novel opens at a crucial stage in the ambivalent relations (friend-rival, superior-subject) of a Benedictine Abbess and her counselor, Mother Stanislaus, who is a brilliant expert on the early Fathers. Each has been moulded to differing interpretations of Benedictine freedom and the vow of stability. M. Stanislaus correctly characterizes her Abbess: "The nature of Mother Hildegard is to tighten everything, to make everything harder. It is the very opposite of what is needed for the opening up and blossoming of the spiritual life of this Abbey."

The action of the novel presents all, M. Stanislaus included, in alignments concentrated upon the Abbess. Early on, a Dominican sent from Rome to investigate a rumor that the Abbey is tinged with Jansenism reports the fears well-founded as to "the depth and scope of the disaster" which has crept into the "heart of the community." And in Rome the Cardinal reflects on the "terrible excess. . . . 300 nuns. And this authority which envelops them and which has no limits! . . . It encircles the individual with dogma and discipline. . . . And this notion of the infallibility of the superior which is taught in the novitiate with iron rigidity."

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mension as she is denied the only portrayal which could confront the real issue. Had the author chosen to enlarge M. Stanislaus as character to the level of a full encounter, her scope and that of the novel might have been otherwise. Father Charles Davis has somewhere observed that, "Great maturity is needed to act prudently when a disobedient authority calls for obedience." That is the theme Miss Huré's book ought to have, both by title and by the multitude of forces she evokes. The conclusion of the novel avoids the myth of a collective solution; on the other hand, in the absence of the spiritual dimensions of grace, the capitulation of the Abbess remains as ambiguous as the future of M. Stanislaus. The novelist is not to be denied the privilege of exploring religious life as a *social process;* she in turn cannot blame readers who find the issues challenging attention which should instead be concentrated on the total impact of the novel.

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At the conclusion of his Foreword to the *City of God* (Image Books), Etienne Gilson makes the following, rather provocative observation: *"One World* is impossible without *One God* and *One Church."* While Joseph Lortz's ecumenical vision in this work is rather more modest in scope, he does strenuously underline a strikingly similar point: "Since Western Civilization is essentially Christian, it must either regain its vital contact with its Christian sources, become re-Christianized, or perish." And as far as Lortz is concerned this vital *resourcement* can only come about through the reunion of the now considerably atomized and frag-

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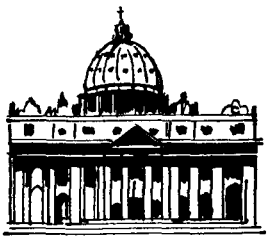

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mented Christian churches. To put it most pointedly, upon the success of the ecumenical venture hinges the fate of Western Civilization.

To many, undoubtedly, this will appear as a somewhat controversial thesis (and this will assuredly be *a fortiori* the case with Gilson's). However, if one is at least willing to entertain Lortz's proposition that "Western Civilization came into being at the moment the West became Christian" and hence "that Christianity was not introduced into Western Civilization," then the scriptural and historical evidence he adduces is decidedly cogent in favor of his argument that the splintering of the Church is the major causal factor in the decline of belief in the West. This decline must inevitably lead to the dissolution of Western Civilization, according to Lortz's view.

However, it is one thing to appreciate the urgency of a satisfactory *dénouement* to the ecumenical venture and quite another to understand the nature of the ecumenical task and to pinpoint the means which will serve to achieve this consummation devoutly to be wished. Both these works are exceptionally valuable on this latter score and even more so because of their clarity, readability and hence accessibility to a wide, non-professional audience.

We have often enough been told that the central theological issue dividing the churches is precisely the problem of the Church. While van de Pol reiterates this view several times, he also makes it abundantly clear, especially through the careful structuring of his presentation, that the Church, while certainly crucial, is in fact a derivative problem, arising out of a new Reformation vision of the gospel, faith and conscience, grace and justification.

Needless to say, without an accurate insight into the *fundamental* causes of division we find ourselves more or less rudderless on the sea of dialogue, reduced, to change the metaphor, to discussing epiphenomena without being able to get beyond mere symptoms.

It is the merit of van de Pol's in-

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vestigation that from a quite detailed analysis of the three major types of Protestantism and their offshoots he is able to disengage the underlying roots of conflict at the same that he clears away various myths and misrepresentations which have effectively beclouded the whole Reformation problematic. By setting the principles of Protestant Christianity alongside those of Catholic Christianity, he is further able to show the difficulty of a *rapprochement*, which conclusion is simply demanded by an objective consideration of the facts.

After succinctly scrutinizing the causes of the Reformation, the role of Luther, and the reform work accomplished in the Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Lortz, in the final chapter of his study, engages in this same kind of juxtaposing, but also attempts in quite straightforward fashion to suggest possible avenues of resolution to the major outstanding differences. Nor is he only interested in points of conflict which separate; rather he is first of all concerned to enunciate those demands of the Reformers to which Catholics can give their full assent and in which we are one.

Polemical theology necessarily takes its point of departure from our mutual oppositions, whereas ecumenical theology must begin with a sense of gratitude from our mutual agreement and work out from there: "We want to appreciate the full extent of this agreement, and let this appreciation have its effect on us." This is a basic law of constructive dialogue and has been forcefully underscored here.

If both works are illuminating with regard to their grasp of the telling theological issues at stake in the dialogue, Lortz is particularly strong with regard to his emphasis on another decisive aspect of the dialogue which will in the last analysis spell success or failure: the absolute necessity of an authentic Christian commitment lived in and through the Church. Without prayer and penance, Lortz repeatedly reminds us, the ecumenical venture is doomed to frustration, for unity is finally the work of God in Christ reconciling the

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world to Himself and decidedly not the result of mere "busy hustling." There is a certain persuasive hortatory tone to Lortz's writing which nicely balances van de Pol's more objective approach and which helps to involve the reader in a more existential way.

"We are being faced with the surging question whether we are living in a post-Christian or rather a pre-Christian age," van de Pol remarks in his Preface. When we look back over the long centuries of Catholic/Protestant hostility, even to the point of bloodletting, it is hard not to be convinced that we have in fact been living in a pre-Christian period of history. Perhaps, however, the ecumenical venture, as yet embryonic, is to be seen as a harbinger of a new Spring in the life of the Church, the prelude to an authentically Christian period of history, which, as Lortz maintains, will determine the survival of Western Civilization, and which may, as Gilson maintains, even have incalculable implications for human civilization as a whole.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page* 683)

spokesmen) and of society itself, this may turn out to be the most appalling dereliction of duty by the bishops yet.

Chaplains there must be, but for the penetration of a secular milieu lay men and women are imperative. The offering of my services for this apostolate has, however, hardly met with overwhelming response. From 30 carefully selected Newman Centers (with the help of a knowledgeable chaplain), I wrote letters to a hand-picked 9, spotted in all the areas of the U.S. Two made no reply at all. Of the others, all showed appreciation for the idea and my qualifications, but 5 were unable to even consider paying a salary proportionate to that of a beginning instructor with an M.A. in their respective institutions; 2 were interested and deliberated with the result that one finally decided he could not afford it (since he was anticipating more *clerical* help next year) and the other found himself embarrassed by an inability to get permission for the plan from his California chancery office! . . .

I would only take issue with Mr. Swidler's comments on the type of theology which should be taught in the Newman programs. Theology *is* an intellectual discipline admittedly, and it should be taught as such in the university by men or women who are the scholarly peers of professors in other disciplines, I agree, but I am not certain that that should be the Newman Center's principal approach and responsibility. Fr. John Kirvan's article "Newman and a New Era" (*Ave Maria*, August 29, 1964), which is one of the most penetrating studies of the problem that has appeared, makes the point that the job of the Newman program is not to try to take the place of a faculty or department of Religion which should be the universities' responsibility. In default of such a department in most of our secular universities, Newman may have to take up some of the slack at least temporarily, but the Newman responsibility, as Swidler seems to admit in other places, is primarily pastoral. Presentation of the faith should not be academic (which is not to say it should be anti-intellectual), but rather geared to forming committed Christians. To me this means that every type of approach that can be thought of must be employed to contribute to the stimulation of the insight of faith, to bring students to the depth dimension of reality. An academic approach to theology *may* be the worst way to achieve this living faith; the two are not unrelated, but they are not co-extensive either. Haven't we had enough of the lopsidedly rational approach to faith in Catholic schools? And so I think there are many men and women who are not necessarily scholarly, but have had an adequate training in theology, and can make a very necessary and real contribution to the Newman apostolate. (Obviously this does not preclude scholars making their contribution to the Newman program also—especially while the secular univer-

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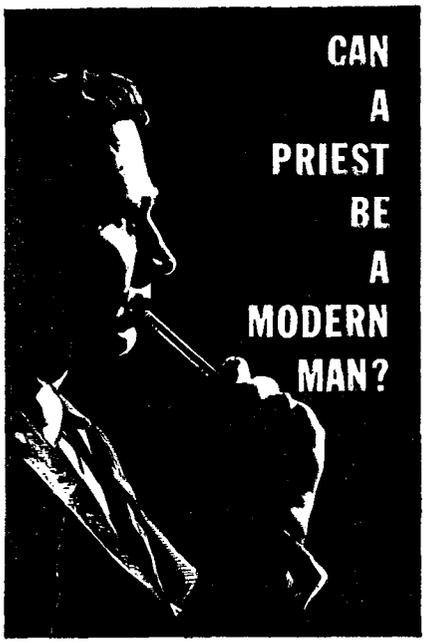

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sities shy away from setting up ecumenical departments of Religion—but I would only maintain that it should not be the predominating approach.)

My only other reservation is about the suggested Catholic student living quarters which he envisions the pastoral care centers setting up. The Newman Center (or Centers depending on the size of the campus) should be the focal point for the liturgical life of the Catholic community on campus, although it may be better to refrain from building formal "chapels" until the shape and forms of expression of the reformed liturgy have crystallized more clearly in mind and experience. The only other benefits which these residences would offer would be a "spiritual atmosphere" and presumably a Catholic atmosphere, and yet he seems to think that they can be prevented from becoming ghettos. I wonder. The temptation to huddle together in that warm secure feeling of being in the comfortable majority is too inviting for most, and yet it is exactly what is calculated to create spiritual schizophrenia in Catholics when they have to face up to the diaspora situation of Christians in the modern world. This phenomenon is borne out to some degree, unfortunately, here at St. Michael's even though we are part of the campus of, and federated in, the secular University of Toronto. It is so much easier to esconce oneself comfortably in the Catholic corner of campus. Some of the more committed students have begun to feel the need to get involved in the "campus co-op" movement, or simply live off campus. It took the driving power of the Holy Spirit, exclusion from the Temple, and eventually the destruction of Jerusalem itself for the apostles to make the definitive break with the ghetto mentality; it looks like it will take no less for us moderns. That feeling of getting out into the midst of the "others" who don't think like we do is scary, I know, but how else can we be the leaven penetrating the mass? And let's think carefully, too, before we start saddling the Christian community anew with more real estate, administration, and maintenance responsibilities unnecessarily.

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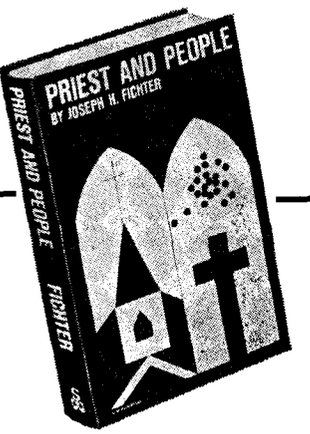

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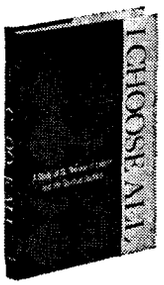

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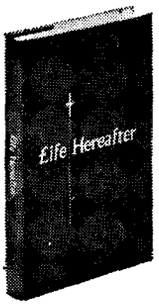

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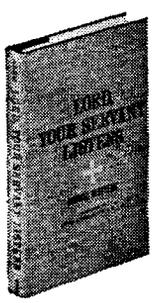

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